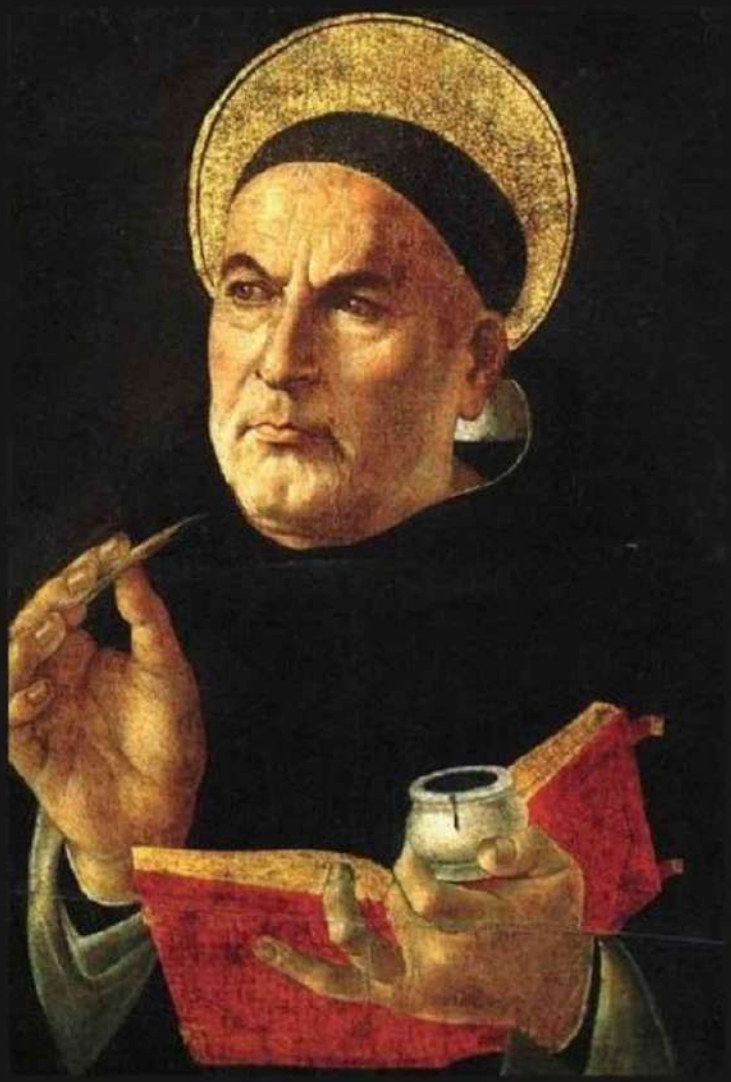
SHOULD OLD AQUINAS BE FORGOTTEN?

Many say Yes, but the Author says No

Revised, Second Edition



NORMAN L. GEISLER

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Why Many Evangelicals Say No

(Revised, Second Edition)

By Norman L. Geisler

2013

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The first edition of this book was published under the title of *Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal* in 1991 by Baker Book House (ISBN: 978-0801038440) and republished in 2003, Wipf & Stock Publishers (ISBN: 978-1592441549). Printed versions of the 2003 unrevised edition may be purchased from WipfandStock.com. This 2013 e-book edition is a light but complete revision of all chapters accomplished by Dr. Geisler in 2013. Most importantly this version adds two completely new chapters—one on evil and one on the origin, nature, and destiny of human beings. In addition, it updates the bibliography with some of the most important recent works by and on Aquinas.

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“SHOULD OLD AQUINAS BE FORGOTTEN AND NEVER BROUGHT TO MIND?” A generation ago most evangelicals were saying Yes to this question, but today there is a whole new generation of evangelical scholars who are saying No. Many of them have doctorates in the field. Most of them have written books or articles on the topic. Of courses, not all of them agree with everything Thomas wrote. For that matter, neither do most Catholic scholars. However, there are an increasing number of non-catholic scholars who see the value of Aquinas for their theology or apologetics. We have set forth some of these values in the first chapter, but they permeate the entire book.

Perhaps, one of the best compliments this book on Aquinas has received is from the late great Thomist, Dr. Ralph McInerny, who wrote: “Reading Geisler's landmark volume, in which he straightforwardly confronts notable evangelical rejections of, or at least cautions about, Aquinas, and seeing the life and writings of the man who has been my philosophical mentor for some forty years freshly presented in a new and surprising light, made me think once again what poor stewards of Aquinas's thought we Thomists have been. If, as Geisler argues, Aquinas has come under evangelical fire for holding things he did not hold, I sometimes think that Thomists have commended him for positions that are not his. For this reason I was particularly interested in Geisler's treatment of the relation between faith and reason. . . . I am flattered and pleased to have been asked to say a few words by way of introduction to this extraordinary book. Dr. Geisler is a man I have known and admired for many years. It is indeed the rare man who can find in an apparent enemy an ally. But Geisler's study of Thomas Aquinas is far more than an instance of the old adage *fas est et ab hoste doceri* (it is right to learn even from the foe). He enables evangelicals and Catholics to see the immense range of truths that unite us, not as some least common denominator, but truths that are at the heart of our Christian faith.”

Acknowledgments

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I am also thankful for the many students (too numerous to mention) over the years who, having been exposed to Aquinas, are now carrying the torch for the "Angelic Doctor."

As always, the dedication of my wonderful wife Barbara has enriched my life and improved this and all my books. I thank God for her faithfulness for over a half century.

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CAN A SEVEN-HUNDRED-YEAR-OLD THINKER still be relevant today? Students of logic will recognize the implication of the question as the fallacy of "chronological snobbery." "New is true" and "old is mold," we are told. Logic informs us, however, that time has no necessary connection with truth. Or at least, if there were any kind of connection, then the time-honored thought ought generally to have the edge.

Traditional Evangelical Criticism

There has too long been a stylish reluctance among evangelicals to admit any allegiance to or dependence on Aquinas. After all, wasn't Aquinas Catholic, not Protestant? Didn’t his natural theology result from human reason, not a supernatural theology based on divine revelation? And didn't he hold an unorthodox Aristotelian view of Christianity as opposed to a more congenial Platonic philosophy, such as the Augustinian tradition preserved? Why should evangelicals be pro-Aquinas? Why should they borrow from a quasi-humanistic, heterodoxical, defender of Aristotle?

Many evangelicals answer these questions negatively. They join regularly in a harmonious chorus of "Ole Aquinas should be forgot and never brought to mind." A sample of some major evangelical thinkers will illustrate an almost universal disdain for the Angelic Doctor.

Widely read and highly regarded evangelical writer Francis Schaeffer blames Aquinas for the rise of modern humanism. He charges that Aquinas bifurcates faith and reason, giving autonomy to the latter. Further, Schaeffer claims that Aquinas denies the depravity of humankind, thus making perfectibility possible apart from God. In this way the stage was set for later humanists to affirm that reason alone is sufficient to resolve our dilemma. Aquinas's separation of faith and reason is an "incipient humanism" where "reason is made an absolute rather than a tool."[1] Due to his wide influence in conservative Protestant circles, Schaeffer's position is taken as gospel by much of evangelicalism.

Reformed apologist Cornelius Van Til is scarcely more complimentary of the medieval saint from Aquino. Thomism, he believes, is based on the "autonomy of man." This, says Van Til, implies that man is

"metaphysically distinct from 'god'." And if so, then "there is on this basis no genuine point of contact with the mind of the natural man at all." Further, "the revelation of a self-sufficient God can have no meaning for a mind that thinks of itself as ultimately autonomous." One of the problems that emerges from this autonomy of reason is "how it may be known that the God of reason and the God of faith are the same."[2]

Van Til describes Thomism as "a position half way between that of Christianity and that of paganism." Theistic arguments are invalid and, at any rate, do not lead to the "self-contained ontological trinity of Scripture." In fact, if we follow Thomistic apologetics, "then Christianity itself must be so reduced as to make it acceptable to the natural man."[3] Van Til characterizes Aquinas's thought as a hybrid of "the pure staticism of Parmenides and a philosophy of the pure flux of Heraclitus with much the same appearance as is the Christ of modern dialectical Protestantism."[4]

Gordon Clark referred to Aquinas's thought as a "Christianized interpretation of Aristotelianism."[5] He rejects Aquinas's arguments for God as "circular," purely "formal," "invalid," and "indefensible"[6] because the skeptic David Hume and the agnostic Immanuel Kant gave irrefutable arguments against proofs for God. As for Aquinas's doctrine of analogous God-talk, Clark confidently declares it to be an "equivocation" based on a "fallacy."[7]

Edward. J. Carnell, former president of Fuller Seminary, yielded to the same temptation to stereotype and stigmatize Aquinas: "Thomas sets out to Christianize Aristotle's God." He, too, accepts the skepticism and agnosticism of Hume and Kant against theistic arguments. These arguments are all empirically based and "from flux only flux can come." Likewise, analogous God-talk is "sheer equivocation" that "makes God unknowable" and opens "the sluice gate . . . to [other] unknowables when one defends an 'unknown God.'"[8]

Noted evangelical theologian Carl F. H. Henry parrots the same type of criticism. Accepting the anti-theistic conclusions of Hume and Kant, he calls Aquinas's claims "extravagant" and built on a "debatable epistemology" whose conclusions are "hardly satisfactory." Furthermore, Aquinas's views are "betrayed also [by] a minimizing of the revelational insistence on the beclouding effect of sin in the life of man." In fact, Henry claims that "the acceptance of Thomism at the University of Paris after

1275 marks the real break from historic Christianity in the medieval Church."[9]

Former Wheaton College Philosopher Arthur Holmes was less than complimentary of Aquinas when he characterizes his view as an emphasis on "the unaided powers of human reason as to press towards a Cartesian position." Holmes also mistakenly represented Aquinas as believing that "natural philosophy can demonstrate the premises of revealed theology." Elsewhere he speaks of the "autonomous" nature of Aquinas's philosophy that "fell apart under the strain of history" when "Aristotelianism fell into disfavor."[10] Holmes also characterizes Aquinas's view of God as "conceived abstractly as a metaphysical necessity, rather than showing himself concretely as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."[11]

On the seven-hundredth anniversary of Aquinas's death, Ronald Nash had perhaps the best opportunity to praise the relevance of Aquinas, but was reluctant to do so. He settled rather for a few general words of historical commendation, carefully qualified by theological criticism. These were based on alleged but unjustified assertions that the notorious problems of Thomistic philosophy were long ago exposed by Gordon Clark. Nash wrote, "There are two errors [Aristotelian empiricism and metaphysics] so significant that they render Aquinas's system beyond any hope of salvage."[12]

With the impressive authority of these evangelical leaders dominating the theological scene for the last generation, there was an almost universal reluctance among other scholars to say a positive word for the Angelic Doctor. There have been, of course, a few secret admirers of Aquinas among us who no doubt crept in unawares. These men have taken Thomistic positions in natural theology, but even so they are usually careful not to identify themselves as Thomists. John H. Gerstner, Stuart Hackett, R. C. Sproul, and Arvin Vos[13] are noteworthy exceptions. There are also a few closet Thomists who borrow the arguments of Aquinas without frankly acknowledging their allegiance to him. When all is told, however, there is really a strong but too often silent minority among us who are directly dependent on Aquinas for our basic theology, philosophy, and/or apologetics."

However, times are changing. Many evangelicals have now joined the Thomistic ranks. As for myself, I gladly confess that the highest

compliment that could be paid to me as a Christian philosopher and apologist is to call me "Thomistic." This, of course, does not mean I accept everything Aquinas wrote naively and uncritically. It does mean that I believe he was one of the greatest systematic minds the Christian church has ever had, and that I can see a lot farther standing on his shoulders than by attacking him in the back. No, I do not agree with everything he ever wrote. On the other hand, neither do I agree with everything I ever wrote. But seven hundred years from now no one will even recognize my name, while Aquinas's works will still be used with great profit.

The Irony of Evangelical Criticism

There is a certain irony and poetic justice involved in much of the criticism of Thomistic thought. Many theologians spend commendable effort via human reason and argumentation in order to establish their own view. This use of reason to argue for one's view of God would warm the heart of the Angelic Doctor. Indeed, even those who argue against rational theology for fideism have a kind of inverse natural theology of their own by virtue of the fact they are using human reason to convince others not to do so. Of course, much of evangelical thought is not very rich philosophically. But a poor man's philosophy is better than none at all. And in whatever sense we engage in systematic Christian thinking, we are in the broad sense of the term indebted to Aquinas.

What is even more ironic is that often evangelicals criticize Aquinas for holding a view he did not hold, while they unwittingly embrace the same view he did. Their views are often stereotypical distortions mediated through the teaching magisterium of our evangelical scholars. It is embarrassing to confess on behalf of our evangelical cause that it is still all too rare to find evangelical philosophers or apologists who really understand the views of Aquinas. As noted, many of them chastise Aquinas for views he never held. Perhaps first-hand and more sympathetic scholarship would have avoided this embarrassment to us. Others, like Schaeffer, make unsubstantiated claims, blaming Aquinas for the rise of modern secular humanism.

Several examples of evangelical misunderstanding of Aquinas will substantiate this point. There is wide agreement among evangelical scholars that the Thomistic view of analogy reduces to equivocation and skepticism. The reason given is that unless there is a univocal element in the analogy,

we cannot be sure that language means the same thing when applied to God.[15] And if there is a univocal element, then the language is not really analogical but univocal. What this criticism completely fails to understand is that Aquinas's doctrine of analogy allows the use of univocal concepts but denies that finite concepts can be applied in anything but an analogical way to an infinite Being (see Chap. 11). That is, Thomistic analogy is not a doctrine about the essential unitary meaning of a conception but, rather, refers to the essential analogical nature of a predication. Thomist's have written massive works defending this thesis on an exegetical basis, but few evangelicals have read Garrigou-Lagrange, Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, George Peter Klubertanz, Ralph McInerny, and Battista Mondin.[16]

Even worse, while criticizing Aquinas for applying finite concepts to God in less than a univocal way, there is scarcely an evangelical thinker who does not do the same thing. Who among us mortals has an infinite concept of the infinite God? Who would claim to have an unlimited knowledge of the Unlimited?[17] But this is precisely what Aquinas means when he says that terms taken from our finite experience—which is the only kind of experience we finite beings have—cannot be applied to God in a univocal way. On the other hand, neither our colleagues nor Aquinas believe that there is a mere equivocal or totally different sense of certain terms as applied to both God and finite things. But if our language about God is neither totally the same (univocal) nor totally different (equivocal), then it must be similar but not identical, which is exactly what is meant by analogical predication. Why, then, do many evangelicals continue to criticize Aquinas when they hold the same basic position?

A second example will illustrate the irony of evangelical criticism of Aquinas. *The Resurrection of Theism* is one of the finest apologetic books ever produced by an evangelical who in many respects is a committed Thomist.[18] Yet in it Stuart Hackett took Aquinas to task for having a *tabula rasa* (blank slate) empirical epistemology that does not account for the a priori element in 'mowers that would enable them to recognize truth when they see it.[19] The insistence on an a priori element is well taken and Hackett is essentially right. Knower's must have some a priori inclination to truth with which they are born or else they could never come to know truth. If people were born completely blank slates, they would never be able to know any more than a completely blank slate can. Unfortunately, Hackett wrongly assumes that Aquinas never allows for this a priori element in the

knowing process. As a matter of fact, Aquinas speaks of an "innate cognition" of truth. Sometimes he calls this a priori element a "natural inclination" that is "divinely instilled in us by God." Elsewhere he refers to our minds as being "naturally endowed" with principles "not known by investigation" but "bestowed on us by nature"[20] (see Chap. 6).

In fact, "there is nothing in the intellect that has not first been in the senses, except intellect itself."[21] And there is within the intellect "preformed germs of which we have natural knowledge." In Aquinas's own words there is a "power of the soul" or "a form of nature," a "natural appetite" or inclination toward the truth that is not derived from sense experience but is the indispensable prerequisite of meaning and truth.[22] Hackett is entirely right in defending this a priori element in the knowing process. But he is completely wrong in supposing Aquinas does not hold that there is an a priori, innate power or natural inclination to truth in us.

Cornelius Van Til, in a very frank summary of his own method in apologetics, castigates the "traditional method": "This method compromises God himself by maintaining that his existence is only 'possible' albeit 'highly probable,' rather than ontologically and 'rationally' necessary." Further, "it compromises the counsel of God by not understanding it as the only all-inclusive, ultimate 'cause' of whatever comes to pass." In addition, "it compromises the revelation of God by . . . compromising its *authority.* On the traditional position the Word of God's self-attesting characteristic, and therewith its authority, is secondary to the authority of reason and experience." We claim, therefore, that Christianity alone is reasonable for men to hold. It is wholly irrational to hold any other position than that of Christianity. Christianity alone does not slay reason on the altar of "chance". . . . The only "proof" of the Christian is that unless its truth is presupposed there is no possibility of "proving" anything at all.

Van Til also insists that we present the message and evidence for the Christian position as clearly as possible, "knowing that . . . the non-Christian will be able to understand in an intellectual sense the issues involved. In so doing, we shall, to a large extent, be telling him what he 'already knows' but seeks to suppress. This 'reminding' process provides a fertile ground for the Holy Spirit."

Finally, Van Til contends that "finite beings, by means of logic as such, [cannot] say what reality *must* be or *cannot* be." It is wrong that "man

must be autonomous, 'logic' must be legislative as to the field of 'possibility' and possibility must be above God."[23]

What is so strange about this whole apologetic is how Thomistic it really is. Aquinas would heartily agree with virtually everything Van Til says. Aquinas would agree: (1) that speaking in the realm of being (metaphysics), logic is dependent on God and not God on logic;[24] (2) that the existence of God is ontologically necessary;[25] (3) that without God nothing could be either known or proven to be true;[26] (4) that the basis for Christian truth is neither reason nor experience but the authority of God as expressed in Scripture;[27] and (5) that there is a revelation of God in nature that depraved natural humankind is willfully repressing.[28]

Of course, it would be naive to assume Van Til was a Thomist in disguise. But he was far closer to Aquinas than he was willing to admit, probably because his understanding of Aquinas is more remote than he realizes. The basic difference between Van Til and Aquinas is that while they both agree *ontologically* that all truth depends on God, Van Til fails to fully appreciate the fact that finite people must ask *epistemologically* how we know this to be a fact. In short, Van Til confuses the order of being and the order of knowing. (A corollary difference is that Van Til holds a coherence view of truth and Aquinas a correspondence view.) If there is a theistic God, then surely everything Van Til said is true. But we cannot beg the whole question and merely assume or presuppose the theistic God of Christianity. Our presuppositions cannot be arbitrary, or our apologetics is merely an arbitrary way of begging the question. If, on the other hand, we argue, as Van Til implied that we should, that Christian theism is a rationally necessary position, then it is difficult to see on what rational grounds we could criticize Aquinas for providing rational support for it. What Aquinas would ask of Van Til's apologetical approach is this: How do you know the Christian position is true? If Van Til answered, "Because it is the only truly rational view," then perhaps the medieval saint would reply, "That is exactly what I believe. Welcome, dear brother, to the club of red-blooded rational theists."

Space does not permit the debunking of all evangelical myths about Aquinas, but several more significant ironies occur (see Chap. 4). Many of our colleagues will repeat with Tertullian vigor: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What have the God of revelation and the God of reason in common? What concord is there between the God of Aquinas's

demonstrations and the God of Abraham's revelations?" Then, oftentimes, scarcely more than a breath or two later, they will decry the Thomistic separation of faith and reason, when their very question implies an even more radical separation between the two domains.

Aquinas's answer as to how one identifies the God of revelation and reason is very clear. There is a formal distinction between faith and reason as procedures, but there is no actual bifurcation of them in the believer.[29] The individual as philosopher can understand certain things about God via his natural revelation (Psa. 19; Acts 14, 17; Rom. 1-2). But the individual as believer in God's supernatural revelation has access to much more truth about God (see Chap. 8). We make similar distinctions today. A scientist who is a Christian says, "As a scientist I know that the moon is a celestial body that revolves around the earth about every 28 days and reflects the rays of the sun. But as a believer I know and accept that the moon was created by God and reflects his glory." But we would not say that this is a bifurcation in the scientist's functions, simply because he has used two different methods that yield different information about the same thing.

The Thomistic distinction between faith and reason is no more radical than this one (see Chap. 5). In fact, it is the evangelical fideists and quasi-fideists who make the radical separation between the God of revelation and the God of reason. They try to build an unspanable Kantian gulf between philosophy and theology, between God's revelation in nature and his revelation in Scripture. How can we identify the God of the cosmological argument and the God of the Judeo-Christian revelation?

Aquinas's answer to this question is deceptively simple: "And this we all understand to be God."[30] Why do we all understand the Infinite Cause of all that exists to be God? Aquinas insists that there cannot be two infinitely perfect beings, both of which are the cause of all the finite things that exist.[31] If there were two infinitely perfect beings, they would have to really differ to be really different. But if they really differed, one would have to possess some perfection that the other lacked. And if the other lacked this perfection, then it would not be infinitely perfect. Hence, it would not be God, since it lacked in perfection. It follows, then, that only one being can be absolutely perfect. But both the God of the cosmological argument and the God of Scripture are held to be infinitely perfect. Therefore, they must be one and the same God. So rather than maintaining an ultimate separation of the objects of faith and reason, such as quasi-

fideistic evangelicals do, Thomism restores the ultimate unity between the God of the natural and the supernatural revelations.

Another interesting incongruity occurs in evangelical criticism of Thomistic thought. Very often the charge is leveled that Aquinas's faith in the Christian God is based on reason and evidence rather than on the authoritative revelation of God. Van Til speaks of this as "the authority of reason and experience." If all truth comes as a revelation from God, then God's authority, not human reason, is the ultimate basis for our belief in the Christian God.[32] But here again Aquinas is in full agreement.

First, Aquinas strongly stresses that the truths of the Christian faith are above reason. While they are not contrary to reason, they are nonetheless unreachable by mere human reason and can only be known by way of supernatural revelation. But some Christian truth is above human reason and, therefore, cannot be based on human reasoning or experience.

Second, even the probable and historical type of evidence for Christianity cannot be used as the basis for belief.[33] God alone is the basis for believing in God. The authoritative self-revelation of God is the only basis for Christian response. We may reason about and for God's revelation, but we must never use reason as a basis for accepting it. God should be believed for his own sake—for his Word's sake—and not for the sake of the evidence or reasons about him or his revelation. Faith should be placed in the God of the evidence and not in the evidence for God. This is not an incidental point for Aquinas; he goes to great length to make it clear. And yet the full force of his distinction is almost universally misunderstood in evangelical circles.

In point of fact, a proper understanding and application of this distinction can make a most significant contribution to contemporary apologetics. It can provide a needed mediation between opposing camps in evangelical apologetics. In the one camp are presuppositionalists, who claim that revelation must be accepted because it is God's revelation by faith and not because of any alleged rational proofs we may have for it. On the other side are the classical apologists, who insist that we have evidences for our faith that make it unnecessary to simply believe it on authority alone. Aquinas would agree with both groups and reconcile the difference as follows. There is no evidence, either rational or experiential, for believing *in* God. God's authoritative self-disclosures are the only basis for

our belief in him. There are good reasons, however, for believing *that* the theistic God exists and *that* the Bible is his revelation." Of course, we do not believe in God because of (or based on) evidence. Rather, we believe in God because of who he is and because of the sovereign but worthy authority he possesses by virtue of his supreme Godhood.

On the other hand, it would be idolatrous for us to make a leap of faith toward, or make an ultimate commitment to, what is less than this sovereign and ultimately worthy God. We must possess good reasons and evidence for believing *that* it is this God we face before we believe *in* him for his own sake. Likewise, we must have reasons and evidence *that* the Bible is God's Word, as opposed to the Qur'an or the Book of Mormon, before we believe *in* the Bible as God's self-disclosed authority to us. Aquinas would argue that God must be believed in simply because he is God, and his revelations must be accepted simply because they come from his authority. That is the only adequate basis for Christian belief. On the other hand, he would agree that we must have good reasons for believing that there is a God and that the Bible is the Word of God, otherwise belief is without justification.

Aquinas and Evangelical Thought

There are numerous ways Aquinas can contribute to evangelical thought. We will only briefly mention some of these contributions here. The rest of this book will provide more detail.

First, Aquinas's view of the nature and interpretation of Scripture is helpful in the current debate on inerrancy and hermeneutics. While he strongly holds to the divine origin and inerrant nature of Scripture, nonetheless he has great appreciation of its human characteristics and profound understanding of the relation between its divine and human elements. In addition, Aquinas was a forerunner of the literal hermeneutic and was an astute exegete of Scripture (see Chap. 4).

Second, Aquinas can help us build a solid theistic basis for doing historical apologetics. It makes no sense to speak of miracles or interventions of God (e.g., the resurrection) that prove that Christ was the Son of God, unless we have first established that there is a God who makes it possible to count this event as a miracle. Theistic apologetics is the logical prerequisite of historical apologetics. Aquinas can help us do this foundational theistic work (see Chaps. 8 and 9).[35]

Third, Aquinas can provide a philosophical answer to the growing influence of the ‘finite god’ of process theology. There is no better philosophical system capable of answering the threat raised by process theology and defending the traditional theistic and biblical view of God as an eternal, unchanging, and absolutely perfect Being. Aquinas can give immeasurable help in responding to this growing movement of process thought that follows Alfred North Whitehead (see Chaps. 7, 8 and 9).[36]

Fourth, Thomistic analogy seems to be the only adequate answer to the problem of religious language (see Chap. 10). Without analogy there appears to be no way to avoid the sheer equivocation of skepticism (with its non-cognitive myths, parables, models, and bliks) or the linguistic idolatry of a univocal one-to-one correspondence between our finite ideas and the infinite mind of God. The middle road of analogy is one that was trod seven hundred years before us, and it still appears to be the best one. We can learn more about it from the scholastic sage.

Fifth, the value of Aquinas in overcoming the separation of the God of reason and of revelation has already been noted above. So too, we have already spoken of Aquinas's reconciliation of the role of reason and evidence with the authoritative revelations of God (see Chap. 5).

Sixth, Aquinas makes a major contribution in the area of epistemology. His answer to the age-old question of which elements in the knowing process are innate and which are acquired is both insightful and enduring. Without sacrificing its contact with the real world through the senses, he shows how it is possible to know eternal truths by human reason (see Chap. 6).

Seventh, Aquinas's answer to the relation of faith and reason is a surprising synthesis of the best elements of rationalism and existentialism. It preserves the sanctity of faith without sacrificing the necessity of reason (see Chap. 4). It stresses the need for faith without diminishing the importance of reason.

Finally, Aquinas addresses reconciliation of human freedom and divine sovereignty (see Chaps. 8 and 11), the nature of divine and human law (see Chap. 12), Parmenidean monism (see Chap. 7), and the problem of evil (see Chap. 11). On these issues, Aquinas adds significantly to a deeper understanding and better defense of the evangelical faith.

Overcoming Evangelical Antipathy

Before concluding this chapter, I wish to offer a proposal for overcoming some of the obstacles to a greater evangelical appreciation of Aquinas. First and foremost is the need for a first-hand reading of Aquinas. Few Thomistic critics are Thomistic scholars. One critic of Aquinas actually wrote out his criticisms of Aquinas and then asked his students to find citations from Aquinas that would support his conclusions. Most criticism of Aquinas is based on either stereotyped textbook scholasticism or second-hand evangelical pseudo scholarship. If these critics interpreted the Bible the way they approach Aquinas—through second-hand critical distortions—we would justly cry "Foul!" In order to appreciate Aquinas, we must read him firsthand for ourselves. It is not necessary to be a Latin scholar to do so. His basic writings are translated into English.

Second, it is well to remember that many of our great theistic apologists of the last two centuries—including William Paley, Joseph Butler, Frederick. R. Tennant, Robert Flint, Benjamin. B. Warfield, Charles Hodge, and C. S. Lewis—are to a large degree indebted to Aquinas. Let us not forget the friendly theistic hand of the saintly doctor that has fed us.

Third, as even Aquinas would readily admit, we need not accept all that he said on physics in order to learn from his metaphysics. Nor need we accept all he said about the church in order to learn from what he taught about God. Indeed, we need not be Catholics in order to learn from his theology. Indeed, Anglican Thomists like Eric Mascall, Jewish Thomists like Mortimer J. Adler, Reformed Thomists like John Gerstner, R.C. Sproul, Arvin Vos, and Baptist Thomists like Stuart Hackett are proof positive that this is not necessary.

Finally, a frank ecumenical confession of our prejudice would be commendable. In a Reformation zeal many have thrown out the Thomistic baby with the Romanistic bath water. My plea is this: the baby is alive and well. Let us take it to our evangelical bosom, bathe it in a biblically based theology, and nourish it to its full strength. As a mature evangelical, Aquinas is a more articulate defender of the faith than anyone in our midst.

THE TRADITIONAL BIOGRAPHIES OF AQUINAS are greatly embellished. Stories about his unusual birth, temptation, and even levitation were part of thirteenth-century legend.[1] Beneath the mass of mythological material it is difficult to determine what is true. James Weisheipl frankly confesses that "most of the legends of his early childhood narrated by William of Tocco and Bernard of Gui have been considered nothing more than ordinary family anecdotes."[2] Factual material, however, can be derived from his writings, teaching career, official records of the groups with which he was associated, his biography (by Bernard of Gui), and the Bull of Canonization.

Early Years (*1224?—1238*)

There is no extant birth record of Aquinas. The date must be inferred from the alleged age he was when he entered the Dominican Order or began to teach at the university. Others use Aquinas's age at death (either forty-eight or forty-nine[3]). Estimates of his birth date range from A.D. 1221 to 1227. Many place Aquinas's birth at 1224 or 1225. Chenu says that "Saint Thomas was born near Aquino, in southern Italy, in the fortified castle of Roccasecca, either at the end of 1224 or at the beginning of 1225.[4] Pasnau agrees, saying, Aquinas was born in 1225 (or thereabout) . . .” (Pasnau, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 2).

Aquinas's father came from Aquino, Italy, a town north of Monte Casino half-way between Rome and Naples. He was called "Count Landulf" of Aquino, but was probably more of a knight than a noble.[5] The title of count ended in 1137, a century before his time. Landulf and his brother Ronald II were apparently aspiring young adventurers who seized the castle of Roccasecca by force and stole the title of nobility with the aid of Emperor Frederick II. They were probably feudal lords.[6]

Aquinas's father died around 1244.[7] His mother, Theodora, survived her husband by about ten years.[8] Some say she was a countess or sister of the emperor, a noble Norman. But she may be confused with the countess who married Aquinas's great-great-grandfather (also named Thomas). The story may be a French fabrication designed to get Norman blood in the family.

The estimated number of Aquinas's brothers and sisters ranges between six and fourteen, but many of these alleged siblings are probably other relatives. Foster claims there were twelve children. Pasnau claims there were at least none (ibid.). Scandone concludes there were seven sons —Aimo, James, Adenulf, Philip, Landulf, Reginald, and Thomas—and five daughters—Marotta (Martha), Mary, Theodora, Adelasia, and an unnamed daughter who died in infancy.[9] Pelster, however, believes the number of sons was four, holding that James, Adenulf, and Philip were sons of a second cousin of Landulf, Thomas, count of Acerra.[10] He also subtracts Adelasia, who he believes is a niece, not a sister.[11]

Aquinas did have a brother Aimo, who defected to Emperor Frederick II and was exiled. Another brother, Ronald, sided with the pope. This was considered an act of treason by Frederick, and led to Ronald's execution. The story that Aquinas was told that the soul of his brother Landulf was in purgatory is probably legendary. His sister Marotta (Martha) was an abbess. Some scholars believe Theodora, Mary, and Adelasia were not actual siblings of Aquinas. There is another story (perhaps legendary) about an unnamed sister who was killed by lightning.

If Aquinas was eighteen when he entered the Dominicans or Order of Preachers (O.P.), then his date of birth would have been around 1224 or 1225. Some claim that he was a child prodigy and was inducted early. If so, then the Dominicans apparently had to break the rules to get him in sooner. Likewise, some claim that the age requirement for Masters was thirty-five, but here again Aquinas may have been sneaked in early. Foster believes that "Thomas tried to excuse himself on the grounds of insufficient age and learning; he was now in fact, about thirty years old."[12] Assuming Aquinas was eighteen years old when he joined the Dominicans, then he was born around A.D. 1224 (or 1225). At any rate the year of his birth was undoubtedly between 1221 and 1225.

Others use the alleged age at which Aquinas died to determine the date of his birth. Since we do know that he died in 1274, if his age at death could be fixed, this would be determinative of the date of his birth. There is, however, disagreement at this point too. The earliest source (William of Tocco) states that Aquinas "was in the forty-ninth year of his Life" when he died.[13] This would mean that he was forty-eight, not yet having reached his forty-ninth birthday. This would place his birth in 1225/26. Bernard of Gui, on the other hand, writing after he had read Tocco, claims Aquinas died "in

the completion of his forty-ninth year," that is, when he was still forty-nine.[14] This would place his birth in 1224/25, a widely accepted date.

Aquinas was born in the castle his father had seized at Roccasecca, which according to Walz, is still standing and easily discernible by its Gothic architecture.[15] He was probably not born in a little house in the lower wall, as some claim. This is probably a later legendary attempt to reflect the humble birth of Christ. Actually, this is an unlikely place for an aspiring count to have his son born. At age five Aquinas was inducted into the abbey at Monte Cassino and instructed by the Benedictines there. Bartholomew of Capua later testified to this under oath. Aquinas makes a possible allusion to this in *Questiones de quodlibet* when asked whether it is right to induct a five-year-old into a religious order.

Aquinas's father wanted him to be an abbot as soon as possible. He was received into oblature by his uncle Landulf Simboldo. It was later discovered that a gift was given at this time to the Benedictines, apparently a customary way of gaining entrance into the order. According to the Rules of St. Benedict, parents of the oblate could give a gift to the monastery. Rule 59 reads: "If . . . they should wish to give an alms to the monastery for their own gain, let them make such a gift as suiteth them, and, if they will, reserve the fruits thereof for themselves."[16] Such a gift from Aquinas's parents is recorded and dated May 3, 1231.

Little is known about life at the abbey, or whether this was a positive or negative influence on the young Aquinas. While there he was probably tutored in science, arts, letters, and morals. The traditional education in the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music) and Trivium (logic, grammar, rhetoric) occurred later. Earlier forms of these subjects, however, may have been taught to Aquinas. According to Walz, reading and writing were taught, along with moral and religious principles. "Reading was practiced in the liturgical books, and so in the Sacred Scriptures themselves."[17]

The education of Aquinas was cut short when the monastery was stormed by his relatives. Their efforts were supported by Frederick II in one of his many excommunications by the pope. Some say Aquinas was twelve at the time, but he was probably fourteen or fifteen, since he was considered a "young genius."

University Studies at Naples (*1239—1244*)

The university at Naples, Italy, was established in 1224 by Frederick II as the first state university.[18] It was operated in competition with the pope's universities in Paris and Bologna. The clergy were thrown out the same year Aquinas entered (1239). He matriculated in spite of the fact that the pope threatened excommunication to any who attended Frederick's universities. In response, Emperor Frederick II threatened imprisonment to any who went to papal universities.

The pope had also condemned the "reading" of Aristotle, although there is some confusion over whether this referred merely to official public "reading" (i.e., teaching) or to any private reading. "Reading" in the thirteenth-century university, however, was understood in the technical sense of "teaching." A teacher, for example, "read" his text.[19] Frederick II, on the contrary, commanded the study of Aristotle. Since Arabian philosophers were experts in Aristotelian philosophy, he brought them in to teach it. Hence, the university was an Avicennian and Averroistic hotbed.

Aquinas had three Aristotelian teachers at the university: Master Martini (Pietro Martin), Peter of Ireland (Petrus de Hibernia), and Erasmus Mundus (not to be confused with the Erasmus of Luther's day). It was here at the university that the first signs of his genius emerged. Foster claims that "even as he made such swift progress through grammar, logic and natural science, God had begun to inspire him with the idea of wholly renouncing the world by entering the Order of the Preaching Friars."[20] His grasp of the material was such that he coached other students in their studies. Aquinas joined the Order of Preachers around 1243 or 1244—in spite of the violent opposition of his parents.[21]

The reasons given by historians as to why Aquinas joined the Dominicans vary. Martin Grabmann maintains that he liked the color of the habit—a doubtful hypothesis on the face of it for a young genius. Others claim Aquinas was attracted by the "new spirit of the age." This is more plausible in view of his subsequent life, especially if "the spirit of the age" includes the intellectual challenge of the times. Pierre Mandonnet sums up the reason for the founding of the Order of Preachers, which probably appealed to Aquinas:

> [It] was very closely bound up with the general needs that were making themselves felt in the Christian world at the start of the

> XIIIth century. Having brought religious life to a new stage of development, the Church of Rome decided to make use of it in order to solve some of the urgent problems with which she was confronted. . . . [It needed] a Church militia that was both well-lettered and actually in contact with the social life of the times.[22]

It is not certain how old Aquinas was at this point. The Constitution of Dominicans demanded eighteen as a minimum age for enlistees. If Aquinas was only eighteen, then his birth would have been around 1224 (or 1225).

Incarceration by His Family (*c. 1244*)

After this Aquinas was incarcerated by his family for a period of one to three years. Foster believes it was for two years.[23] The exact reason for the incarceration is not clear, but it seems to be tied to political struggles in which his family was often involved on the side of the emperor against the pope. Here again Foster seems to embellish the event, declaring that Aquinas's brothers found Thomas with four friars of the Order, resting from the fatigues of the journey by the wayside spring; and immediately—behaving like enemies rather than brothers—seized him and carried him off by force. But they first tried to make him take off his religious habit, ordering him to do so at first, and then, since he would not obey, attempting to tear it from him violently; but he put up such a resistance that, for fear of wounding him, they had to let him continue to wear it.[24]

Fanciful stories, stemming from the accounts of William of Tocco and Bernard of Gui, of Aquinas's family-forced temptation by a beautiful young seductress are interesting but probably legendary. Father Angelus Walz is no doubt correct in agreeing with Mandonnet, "who sees in the account of Tocco and Gui of the girdle of chastity not a material reality but rather the expression of an inner meaning."[25] The temptress is described as a "lovely but shameless girl, a very viper in human form [who] was admitted to the room where Thomas was sitting alone, to corrupt his innocence with wanton words and touches." In response, "springing toward the fire that burned in his room, Thomas seized a burning log from it and drove out the temptress, the bearer of lust's fire"[26]—a beautiful but fanciful description at best. Aquinas, like other monks, did take a vow of chastity, a vow arising no doubt out of deep religious motivation. Some believe, however, that he had a basic fear of women.

Just why his family held him captive is not clear. There is no reason to believe his family was vicious. It was probably simply a further stage in the political struggles in which his family was involved. Apparently, in one of their many "ins and outs" with the pope, this was an "out." At any rate, they apparently wanted to rescue Aquinas from the Order of Preachers, just as they had seized him earlier from the Benedictines. His eventual release came when his uncle Ronald was caught plotting against Frederick II. This was apparently an attempt to regain the pope's favor.

In short, the Aquinas family seemed to move with the political winds, as they blew back and forth between the pope and the emperor. Thomas was apparently a pawn in their political games on at least two occasions.

Further Studies at Paris and Cologne (*1245—1248*)

The Christian university of the thirteenth century has been called "the oven in which the intellectual bread of the Latin world was baked."[27] A letter dated February 4, 1254, from the University of Paris to the church is a rich source of information about the university:

> It was God's own right hand that planted in Paris this venerable *Studium,* a fountain of wisdom, divided into four faculties: theology, law, medicine, and philosophy (the last divided into three parts: rational, natural, and moral), which like the four rivers of paradise directed the four quarters of the world, water and enrich the whole earth, so that inestimable advantage both spiritual and temporal is brought to Christendom.[28]

Beginning sometime around 1245 Aquinas began studying under Albert the Great in the Convent of St. James in the University of Paris. It is said that Albert incited him to study and to silence. Aquinas was "a quiet boy with an unusually mature bearing; saying little, but already thinking much; rather silent and serious and, seemingly, much given to prayer."[29] It is probably from this meditative silence that he obtained the nickname "dumb ox." Albert's prophetic retort to the title was: "We call this lad a 'dumb ox,' but I tell you that the whole world is going to hear his roar."[30] Aquinas went to Cologne with Albert and helped start a school for the Dominicans (1248—1252). Here he held the position of bachelor lecturer, a minor young teacher. It was here also, according to the Bull of Canonization, that he was ordained to the priesthood.

Frederick II died on December 13, 1250, and the pope took his empire.[31] The Aquinas family was understandably working hard for the pope. About this time it is alleged that Aquinas was offered Monte Casino Abbey. But this is unlikely, since it was Benedictine and he was a Dominican.

Returning to Paris to Teach at the University (*1252—1259*)

From this point details about Aquinas's life are more clear, since they are directly connected to his abundantly documented teaching and writing career. Around 1252 Aquinas returned to the University of Paris. When Aquinas entered, the secular-religious fight was in full swing. As scholars have noted, "the University, at this time, was the scene of a bitter struggle, due precisely to the rivalries between the seculars and religious."[32] The seculars (priests belonging to no religious order) were jealous of the mendicants (priests belonging to religious orders). The seculars may have been envious of the success of the religious orders. Or, more likely, they may have felt that the mendicants were instruments of the pope.[33] In a letter of Alexander IV, written on June 17, 1256, we read:

> The aforesaid masters and students have had no care, as we well know, to preserve that concord which the thorns of discord have assailed. They have opposed in the most unworthy manner those who desired to attend the lectures, disputations, and sermons of the friars, and in particular those who wished to be present at the inaugural lecture of our beloved son Fr. Thomas d'Aquino.[34]

A fight broke out over the chair of John of St. Giles, who left the seculars for the Dominican Order. The Dominicans then claimed his chair. The seculars insisted that the defection of the teacher was from his chair, not with it. The mendicants proceeded to drive out seculars, and the police were called in to still the riot. Pope Alexander IV restored the seculars' academic privileges around 1255. But the resulting tension was so great that by the next year King Louis had to provide a military guard to protect the Dominicans. Chenu notes that Aquinas was "at the heart of the controversy, which almost turned into an open battle."[35]

Aquinas himself was one source of the tension. University law said teachers had to be thirty years of age. Aquinas was well under age, so he was disliked. The Dominicans, on the other hand, wanted their most

articulate spokesman at the university, and they were apparently willing to bend the rules to make this possible.

Between 1252 and 1256 Aquinas lectured on the Bible and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, a widely used textbook of theological propositions. In 1256 he received his *licentia* to teach. Subsequently, the pope appointed him to a chair at the university. His *principium* (inaugural lecture), taken from Baruch 4:1,[36] was boycotted, but in August 1257, Pope Alexander IV forced the university to accept both Aquinas and a young Franciscan teacher named St. Bonaventure. By 1259 another papal decree was necessary to restore order at the university.

Return to Italy (*1259—1268*)

For the next decade Aquinas taught at several papal curiae in Italy. From 1259 to 1261 he served at the School of Anagni under Pope Alexander IV. Later he taught at the papal curia of Orvieto under Pope Urban IV (1261—1264) and the School of Viterbo under Pope Clement IV (1267/68). It is here that Aquinas met William Moerbeke, who was making fresh translations of Aristotle from the Greek on which Aquinas was later to base his famous commentaries. Christian writers prior to this point had depended on an Aristotle mediated to them through the skewed Platonic eyes of Arabian commentators. The influence of medieval Platonic thought was lessening.

Final Return to Paris to Teach (*1268—1272*)

The old religious-secular controversy broke out again and Aquinas was called back to Paris. The fight was so hot that the usually calm Aquinas wrote an uncharacteristically heated booklet entitled *Contra pestiferam* (*Against the Plague-Bearers*). Some of Aquinas's students even stood up in his class and read St. Amour's pamphlet against him.

The other controversy at the time was that of the Averroists (unorthodox Aristotelians). Averroes (1126—1198), the great Muslim philosopher, was called "the commentator" in Aquinas's writings. Averroes denied that man had either a passive or active intellect, claiming both were universal. This, of course, was contrary to the traditional Christian belief that each individual had a distinct mind, rather than being part of some pantheistic universal Mind.

Averroes was highly rationalistic, claiming nothing is to be believed but what is self-evident or reducible to it. In addition, he held that creation

and matter were eternal, contradicting the Christian teaching that creation had a beginning. The Latin Averroists of the time, including Siger of Brabant and Boetius of Dacia, even went so far as to separate faith and philosophy. They espoused a "double truth" view, holding simultaneously to contradictory truths—one from reason and the other from revelation. They also claimed that creation is eternal, the soul is mortal, there is one universal Intellect for all people, and there are no miracles. It is this heretical tide of Plotinian thought that history credits Aquinas with stemming.

Despite the intense controversy in which Aquinas engaged the unorthodox Averroists, at his death they wrote to the Preachers a most warm letter in which they begged to have his last writings as well as the honor of preserving his remains at Paris, calling him "so good a cleric, so kind a father, so outstanding a doctor."[37]

Return to Italy and Death (*1272—1274*)

It is not certain why Aquinas returned to Naples. It is possible that the Dominicans were bribed to get him out of France. The brother of the king of France did give gold at this time to the Dominicans. On the other hand, Aquinas may have simply been called back to resume duties at a papal school.

Near the end of his life Aquinas stopped his scholarly pursuits. After December 6, 1273, he wrote no more, leaving even his great *Summa theologiae* unfinished. According to Bartholomew, who was closer to the incident than others, Aquinas expressed the reason for not writing to Reginald as follows: "I cannot; all that I have written seems like straw."[38] It is assumed by some that Aquinas had a mystical experience, in view of which everything else paled into insignificance. James Weisheipl, although not ruling out a mystical experience, points out that Aquinas apparently had a "physical breakdown resulting in a mental disturbance, anxiety, and a change in emotional values wherein the *Summa* and the Aristotelian commentaries no longer seemed important."[39]

We do know that Aquinas engaged in a physically exhausting daily schedule, which may have contributed to his breakdown." Weisheipl notes that Aquinas adhered to a "strict regimen." He arose early in the morning and attended two services at the chapel. After this, he immediately began his teaching. After descending from the [professorial] chair, he set himself

to write or dictate to his many secretaries until the time for dinner. After dinner he went to his cell to pray until siesta time, after which he resumed his writing and dictating. After working late at night, he spent considerable time praying in the chapel of St. Nicholas before the brethren arose for Matins [prayers]; when the bell for Matins sounded, he quickly returned to his cell and appeared to have risen with the rest. After Matins he seems to have gone to bed.[41]

Aquinas died on March 4, 1274, at Fossanova on the way to the Council of Lyons. Speculation ranges widely on why he was attending the council. Some say to be condemned; others say to be commended. Some of Aristotle's philosophy, which Aquinas utilized in expressing the Christian faith, was condemned in 1277 by the bishop of Paris.[42] But Aquinas was canonized in 1326, and shortly after the Protestant Reformation he was made a Doctor of the Church (1567). In 1879 he was proclaimed a Father of the Church in the papal proclamation *Aeterni patris.* In 1880 he was made the patron of schools in the Catholic Church. Up until the time of Vatican II, his philosophy dominated Catholic schools. Although his influence has been somewhat diminished within Catholic circles, it is presently increasing particularly among evangelical Protestants.

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The Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas wrote some ninety works.[43] Many of these works are multivolume sets. There are also several works of uncertain authenticity attributed to him." The Latin-English edition of the *Summa theologiae*, for example, is approximately sixty volumes. Likewise, *De veritate* and *Summa contra Gentiles* are multivolume sets. Aquinas's works represent the whole gamut of theological, philosophical, biblical, and ethical topics. The most famous and mature work is the *Summa theologiae*, one of the most massive and systematic theologies ever produced. The *Summa contra Gentiles* is more easily read because it is less technical and dialectical. One of the most widely published small works, On *Being and Essence*, provides the essence of his philosophy. His most popular theological work is his *Compendium of Theology,* and by far the most widely acclaimed work on Scripture is his *Catena aurea* (*Golden Chain*) of quotations from the fathers on the four Gospels.

Aquinas's life was a model of spiritual commitment and intellectual rigor. As Pasnau noted, “the fruit of this marvelous dedication and abstraction is the more than eight million words that Aquinas left us.” This included “over eight million words.” He “wrote more than eight times as much as Aristotle. . . . At the height of his productivity, Aquinas was writing an astonishing four thousand words a day” (Pasnau, Ibid., 1) By any standard, his writings are a massive achievement of the human mind, especially for someone who died before he was fifty years of age. The fact that many of his works are translated into most of the major languages of the world and are still studied and followed extensively today, by both Catholics and non-Catholics, is ample testimony to their enduring value. He was one of the greatest Christian thinkers of all time. So whether one agrees with all he taught, it is obvious that old Aquinas has not been forgotten.

THE THOUGHT OF AQUINAS IS RICH AND VARIED. He wrote on many topics, including faith and reason, revelation, knowledge, reality, God, analogy, creation, human beings, government, and ethics. His mind was intensely analytic, making his arguments difficult for the modern reader to follow. Furthermore, his style is syllogistic and highly complex. So that the reader does not get lost in the intricacies of Aquinas's views, it will be helpful to present an introductory summary of many of his basic ideas, especially those of interest to evangelicals. The rest of the book will then treat these major topics in more depth.

Revelation

God has revealed himself in both nature and Scripture. His natural revelation (Rom. 1:19-20) is available to all people and is the basis for natural theology. The creation reveals one God and his essential attributes, but not the Trinity or the unique doctrines of the Christian faith, such as the incarnation of Christ or the way of salvation. This revelation in nature also includes a moral law that is binding on all people (Rom. 2:12-15).

God's divine law is for believers; it is revealed in Scripture. Although written by humans utilizing different literary styles,[1] the Bible is the only divinely authoritative writing.[2] The Bible is inspired and inerrant, even in matters that are not essential to our redemption.[3] No other Christian writing, neither the fathers nor the creeds, are inspired or revelatory. They are only human interpretations of God's revelation in Scripture.[4]

Faith and Reason

Following Augustine, Aquinas believes faith is based on God's revelation in Scripture. Support for faith, however, is found in miracles and probable arguments.[5] Although God's existence is provable by reason, sin obscures our ability to know[6] and so belief (not proof) *that* God exists is necessary for most persons?[7] Human reason, however, is never the basis for faith *in* God. Demanding reasons for belief in God actually lessens the merit of faith.[8] Believers, nonetheless, should reason about and for their faith.

According to Aquinas, there are five ways we can use reason to demonstrate God's existence. We can argue: (1) from motion to an

Unmoved Mover; (2) from effects to a First Cause; (3) from contingent being to a Necessary Being; (4) from degrees of perfection to a Most Perfect Being; and (5) from design in nature to a Designer of nature.[9] Behind these arguments is the premise that all finite, changing beings need a cause outside themselves.

However, there are mysteries of the Christian faith, such as the Trinity and the incarnation, which cannot be known by human reason but only by faith in God's revelation in Scripture.[10] These mysteries go beyond reason, but are not contrary to reason.

Knowledge

Aquinas believes that knowledge comes either by supernatural revelation (in Scripture) or by natural means. All natural knowledge begins in experience.[11] We are born, however, with an a priori, natural, innate capacity to know.[12] Everything that is in our mind was first in the senses, except the mind itself.

Knowing something for certain is possible by means of first principles. First principles are known by way of inclination before they are known by cognition. These include: (1) the principle of identity (being is being); (2) the principle of non-contradiction (being is not non-being); (3) the principle of excluded middle (either being or nonbeing); (4) the principle of causality (nonbeing cannot cause being); and (5) the principle of finality (every being acts for an end). By these first principles the mind can attain knowledge of reality—even some certain knowledge. Once the terms are properly understood, these first principles are self-evident, that is, they are undeniable.[13]

Reality

Like Aristotle, Aquinas believes it is the function of the wise person to know order. The order reason produces in its own ideas is called logic. The order reason produces through acts of the will is known as ethics. The order reason produces in external things is art. The order reason contemplates (but does not produce) is nature. Nature contemplated insofar as it is sensible is physical science. Nature studied insofar as it is quantifiable is mathematics.[14] Nature or reality studied insofar as it is real is metaphysics. Metaphysics, then, is the study of the real as real or being insofar as it is being.

The heart of Aquinas's metaphysics is the real distinction between essence (*what* something is) and existence (*that* which is) in all finite beings.[15] Aristotle had distinguished between actuality and potentiality, but applied this only to things composed of form and matter, not to the order of being as such. Aquinas takes Aristotle's distinction between act and potency and applies it to form (being).

Aquinas argues that only God is Pure Being, Pure Actuality, with no passive potentiality whatsoever. God, of course has “active potency” or power. In fact, he is all-powerful. But the central premise of the Thomistic view of reality is that act in the order in which it is act is unlimited and unique, unless it is cojoined with passive potency. God alone is Pure Act (or Actuality) with no potentiality or form. Angels are completely actualized potentialities (pure Forms). Humankind is a composition of form (soul) and matter (body) which is progressively actualized.

God

God alone *is* Being (I am-ness) pure and simple. Everything else merely *has* being. God's essence is identical to his existence. It is of his essence to exist. That is, God is a Necessary Being. He cannot not exist. Neither can God change, since he has no potentiality to be anything other than what he is. Likewise, God is eternal, since time implies a change from a before to an after. But as the "I Am," God has no befores and afters. God also is simple (indivisible) since he has no potential for division. And he is infinite, since Pure Act as such is unlimited, having no potentiality to limit it.[16] Besides these metaphysical attributes, God is also morally perfect and infinitely wise.[17]

Analogy

Natural knowledge of God is derived from his creation the way an efficient cause is known from its effects. Since God made the world, his creation resembles him. It is not the same as him (univocal), but it is like him. Our natural knowledge of God is based on that resemblance or analogy. Neither can it be totally different from him (equivocal), since the cause communicates something of itself to its effects.

Univocal (totally the same) knowledge of God is impossible, since our knowledge is limited and God is unlimited. Equivocal (totally different) knowledge of God is impossible, since creation resembles the Creator; the effect resembles its efficient cause. Of course, there are great differences

between God and creatures. Hence, the *via negativa* (the way of negation) is necessary. That is, we must negate all limitations from our concepts before we apply them to God. We must apply to God only the perfection signified (goodness, truth, etc.), but not the finite mode of signification. So the same attribute will have the same definition for creatures and Creator but a different application or extension. The reason for this is that creatures are only finitely good while God is infinitely Good. So before we can appropriately apply the term "good" to God, we must negate the finite mode (how) in which we find good among creatures and apply the meaning (what) to God in an unlimited way.[18]

Creation

God did not create the world out of himself (*ex Deo*) or out of preexisting matter (*ex materia*). Rather, he created it out of nothing (*ex nihilo*).

Although an eternal creation is theoretically possible (since there is no logical reason an eternal cause cannot be causing eternally), nevertheless, divine revelation teaches that the universe had a beginning. So God created a temporal universe. There was literally no time before God created—only eternity. God did not create *in* time; rather, with the world there was the creation *of* time. So there was no time before time began.[19]

Further, the universe is dependent on God for its existence. He not only caused it to come to be, but he also causes it to continue to be. God is both the Cause of the origination of the whole of creation and the Cause of its continuation. The universe is absolutely dependent on God; it is contingent. Only God is necessary.

Human Beings

A human being is a matter/form unity of soul and body. Despite this unity, there is no identity between soul and body. The soul survives death and awaits reunion with the physical body at the final resurrection.[20] The human soul is the formal cause while the body is the material cause of a human being. God, of course, is the efficient cause. Parents are only the instrumental cause of the body. The final cause (purpose) is to glorify God, who created us. Adam was directly created by God at the beginning, and God directly creates each new soul in the womb of its mother.[21]

Ethics

Just as there are first principles of thought, so there are first principles of action, called laws. Aquinas distinguishes four kinds of law. Eternal law is the plan by which God governs creation. Natural law is the participation of rational creatures in this eternal law. Human law is a particular application of natural law to local communities. Divine law is the revelation of God's law through Scripture to believers.[22]

Aquinas divides virtues into two classes: natural and supernatural. The former include prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. These are revealed through natural revelation and are applicable to all human beings. Supernatural virtues consist of faith, hope, and love. They are known from supernatural revelation in Scripture and are binding on believers.[23]

Works on Aquinas

There are many helpful tools for studying Aquinas. Some of the more important reference works include the following:

Bonin, Therese. Bibliography of full listing of all English translations of Aquinas at Duequesne University at www.home.duq.edu/-bonin/thomasbibliogrpahy.html

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Deferrari, R. J. A *Complete Index of the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas.* Catholic University of America Press, 1956.

Latin-English Dictionary of Thomas Aquinas. Daughters of St.Paul, 1960.

A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas Based on Summa Theologiae and Select Passages of His Other Work. Catholic University of America Press, 1960.

Mandonnet, P., and J. Destrez. *Bibliographic Thomiste.* Paris, 1921. Miethe, Terry, and Vernon

McDermott, Timothy, trans. *Select Writings* [of Aquinas]. Oxford University Press, 1993.

McKeon, Richard, ed. *Selections from Medieval Philosophers.* Vol. 2. Contains a Latin dictionary of key terms.

Schutz, Ludwig. *Thomas-Lexicon* [in German and Latin] Paderborn: Schoningh, 1895

Stockhammer, Morris. *Thomas Aquinas Dictionary.* Philosophical Library, 1965.

Repertoire bibliographique, published under various titles by Louvain, 1895-1963.

CD-ROM: Past Masters: Humanities Databases, Full Text, Scholarly Editions (Charlottesville, VA; InteLex, 1992) with all of Aquinas's translated works.

Journals that Feature or Contain Articles on Aquinas

The Aquinas Papers, Blackfriars, London.

Modern Schoolman, St. Louis University.

New Scholasticism, American Catholic Philosophical Association.

Proceedings of Jesuit Society (fewer articles on Aquinas since Vatican II).

Speculum (a journal of medieval studies).

The Review of Metaphysics (The Catholic University of America)

Thomist (published by the Dominican Fathers).

AQUINAS HAD A DEEP RESPECT FOR SCRIPTURE and made extensive use of it in his writings. From his youth in the monastery at Monte Cassino, Aquinas was taught the Scriptures. In fact, "at the faculties of theology and at all the schools where theological instruction was given, i.e., in the monasteries and cathedral schools, the Bible was already in the early middle ages the textbook."[1] At the monastery "reading was practiced in the liturgical books, and so in the Sacred Scriptures themselves."[2] Later, as a member of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans), Aquinas was required not only to study Scripture but to expound it between one and four times a week.[3]

While a student, "St. Thomas, master in theology, took the text itself of the Old and New Testament as the subject matter of his official course."[4] The "first cycle [of Bible courses] extended over the young theologian's first two years of study." After two years of theology, "a second biblical cycle itself was the personal teaching responsibility of the 'master.' In this case, the master applied himself to a minute and prolonged exegesis of the one or the other of the books of Scripture."[5] Walz notes that "Thomas, during his professorship, lectured principally on the scriptures, since the Bible was the foundation of all theological teaching."[6]

Aquinas's *principium* (inaugural address) at the University of Paris bears in many manuscripts the title of *Commendatio Sacra Scriptura* (*Comments on Sacred Scripture*).[7] In it the newly installed professor declares that the doctors of Holy Scripture must excel by their excellent conduct in life, to be apt to preach with good success; they must be illuminated, to be able to instruct well; they must be well instructed and able to refute errors in their disputations, in accordance with the words of the Apostle, who says that the ecclesiastical authority must be able to diminish with sane doctrine and to refute adversaries.[8]

As a professor, "his duty was to 'read' the text of the Bible to his pupils and to explain it in a few words, *cursorie,* that is, without insisting on special questions, on the basis of the glosses or of the parallel biblical text."[9] In the Dominican Order (O.P.) "such a *biblicus* [as Aquinas was] lectured every day, except on Sundays and church holidays; he had to finish the whole Bible in three years."[10] After serving as a *baccalareus biblicus*

(bachelor biblical lecturer) for two years (1252—1254), Aquinas was appointed a *baccalareus sententiarum* (1254—1256), and then was promoted to *magister sacrae theologiae* (master of sacred theology).[11] The master teacher "did not explain the biblical text *cursorie*, that is, in a few words. He often entered into its sense and consequences, especially as these offered difficulties."[12]

Aquinas's extensive study of the biblical text bore permanent fruit in his commentaries, which include *Jeremiah and the Lamentations, The Commentary on Psalms, The Commentary on the Book of Job, The Gospel According to Saint Matthew,*[13] *The Commentary on Saint John, The Commentary on the Epistles of Saint Paul,* and his famous *Catena aurea* (*Golden Chain*) in which "he glossed the four gospels by means of a continuous exposition taken from the sayings of the saints."[14] Twenty-two Latin fathers and fifty-seven Greek fathers appear. Even critical scholars of Erasmus's caliber had nothing but praise for it.[15]

In view of his systematic exposure to and comprehensive use of Scripture, we must agree with Lamb that Aquinas's approach to Scripture is one of the most neglected aspects of Thomistic studies. Even so, during the centuries when his disciples were eagerly commenting on his *Summa* and his other systematic works, his commentaries on Scripture gradually became enveloped in thick layers of dust. The dust has been vigorously removed during the past few decades, but not all of it has settled.[16]

The Divine Authority of Scripture

Aquinas emphasizes the study and exposition of Scripture because he believed that the Bible is the revelation of God. It is the prophetic declaration of God's will to humankind. Prophets and biblical writers are the instruments, but God is the ultimate Source of all that is affirmed or implied in his written Word.

God as the Author of Scripture

Aquinas insists that "the author of holy Scripture is God."[17] Thus "revelation is the basis of sacred Scripture or doctrine."[18] For "holy Scripture looks at things in that they are divinely revealed."[19] So it is "in Holy Scripture, through which the divine will is declared to us."[20] Citing 2 Timothy 3:16 ("All Scripture is inspired of God"), Aquinas refers to the Bible as "Divinely inspired Scripture."[21] Humankind needs an infallible

"divine revelation"; otherwise the truth about God would be apparent to only a few, and only then after a long time and mixed with many mistakes.[22]

The Relation of the Divine and Human in Scripture

Like the fathers before him, Aquinas sometimes speaks of the human authors of Scripture as the "instruments of divine operation."[23] For "in prophetic revelation the prophet's mind is moved by the Holy Spirit as a defective instrument by its principal cause." Aquinas cites 2 Samuel 23:2 in support of his view: David says, "The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me."[24] When God moves a human writer, an imperfect instrument can utter a perfect message, even to the very "words."[25] This is possible because the perfect Principal or Primary Cause (God) works on the imperfect secondary cause. In popular language, God can draw a straight line with a crooked stick.

Unlike some of his predecessors, however, Aquinas does not view the human authors as mere instruments of God's causality. Rather, they are secondary causes under the direct providential action of God, the Primary Cause. Aquinas argues that "the proper disposition is a necessary requirement for the correct use of prophecy since the use of prophecy proceeds from the created power of the prophet. Therefore, a determinate disposition is also required."[26] This disposition is provided by the divine Architect of salvation-history. God disposes people and events so that they will communicate his Word precisely.[27] In this way the human characteristics of the prophets in no way depreciate the message they convey. Rather, the message "proceeds in harmony with such dispositions."[28]

Aquinas illustrates the divine-human relation in prophecy by the model of teacher-learner:

> Prophecy is a type of knowledge impressed on the prophet's intellect from a divine revelation. This happens after the manner of education. Now the truth of knowledge is the same in both the student and the teacher since the student's knowledge is a likeness of the teacher's knowledge.[29]

Rejecting the mechanical illustrations used by many of his predecessors (such as, God playing on a musical instrument), Aquinas provides new insight into the process of inspiration. Just as a teacher

activates the potential of students for knowledge, so God (the Primary Cause) activates the potential of people (secondary causes) to know what he desires to reveal. Thus, prophets are not puppets or even secretaries but human learners. And, as a good teacher, God activates in prophets only what they have the potentiality to receive in terms of their capacities, culture, language, and literary forms.

The Use of Human Literary Forms

The divine origin of Scripture in no way diminishes its true humanity. Every word was written by human beings in human language reflecting their human culture. All the human traits of Scripture remain intact, including the use of various literary styles. For "Scripture conveys divine things to man in a style that men are wont to use."[30] For "whatever images [figures of speech; Latin: *dicendum]* are used to express the prophesied reality is a matter of indifference to prophecy."[31]

In the prologue to his commentary on the Psalms, Aquinas enumerates many of the literary forms of the Bible: narration, admonition, commands, exhortations, prayer, praise, proverb, and parable. When revealing himself to the biblical writers, God does so in terms of these human literary forms. So in the final analysis the words of Scripture are both wholly divine and wholly human. They are, to coin a term for Aquinas, theathropic (God-man) words.

The Inerrancy of Scripture

While many in modem times have denied the inerrancy of Scripture, there is no question where Aquinas stands on the issue. In his commentary on Job he declares that "it is heretical to say that any falsehood whatsoever is contained either in the gospels or in any canonical Scripture."[32] He insists that "a true prophet is always inspired by the spirit of truth in whom there is no trace of falsehood, and so he never utters untruths."[33] Pointedly, he declares that "nothing false can underlie the literal sense of Scripture."[34] Therefore, "the truth of prophetic proclamations must needs be the same as that of divine knowledge. And falsity . . . cannot creep into prophecy."[35] Agreeing with Augustine, Aquinas confesses of the books of Scripture, "I firmly believe that none of their authors have erred in composing them"[36] and refers to Scripture as "unfailing truth." The Bible, then, is the infallible and inerrant Word of God.

In his commentary on John, Aquinas claims that "those who wrote the Scriptural canon, such as the Evangelists, Apostles and others like them, so firmly asserted the truth that they left nothing to be doubted. Thus it stresses: 'And we know his testimony is true' and 'If anyone preach to you a gospel, besides that which you have received, let him be anathema."[37] In short, the Bible is so completely and sufficiently without error that nothing in it is to be doubted.

Contrary to some who believe that only what is essential to faith is without error,[38] Aquinas believes that the Bible is not only true in all that it teaches but also in all that it touches. For things "incidentally or secondarily related to the object of faith are all the contents of Scripture handed down by God."[39] As examples of things in the Bible not essential to faith, but nevertheless without error, Aquinas cites such things as the fact that Abraham had two sons and that a dead man rose when Elijah's bones touched him.[40]

The Superiority of the Bible

In a real sense Aquinas agrees with the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura,* that the Bible alone is the Word of God, the totally sufficient norm for our faith. "We believe the prophets and apostles because the Lord has been their witness by performing miracles. . . . And we believe the successors of the apostles and the prophets *only in so far as they tell us those things which the apostles and prophets have left in their writings."*[41]

Aquinas asserts that "the truth of faith is contained in sacred Scripture."[42] Hence, "one is held to explicit belief in such matters *only when it is clear to him that they are in truth contained in the teaching of faith."*[43] The context of this statement indicates that "the teaching of faith" refers to the Scriptures.

After insisting that the biblical writers "so firmly asserted the truth that they left nothing to be doubted" and that anyone who rejects it should be "anathema," Aquinas adds that "The reason for this is that *only the canonical Scriptures are normative for faith.* Whereas others who write about the truth do so in such a way that they do not want to be believed unless what they affirm is true."[44]

While believing that the Bible alone is God's written revelation,[45] Aquinas does not mean to imply that it needs no interpretation,[46] but that the

Scriptures have no peer. "So, sacred Scripture, which has no superior science over it, disputes the denial of its principles; it argues on the basis of those truths held by revelation."[47] The Bible is superior to any other book or person. All else must be subject to its divine authority.

The Role of Christian Teachers

Both in precept and practice, any pronouncement of faith other than the Scriptures must be subject to the Scriptures. Agreeing with Augustine, Aquinas affirms that *"only to those books or writings which are called canonical* have I learnt to pay such honour that I firmly believe that none of their authors have erred in composing them." Thus, "other authors . . . I read to such effect that, no matter what holiness and learning they display, I do not hold what they say to be true because those were their sentiments."[48] The Scriptures are the revelation of God; everything else is an interpretation of them, not a new revelation.

The Place of Creeds

For Aquinas, all the truth of faith is contained in Scripture. A creed "is not added to Scripture, but drawn from Scripture."[49] It is a later symbol of God's revelation; "a later symbol does not abolish an earlier one, but elaborates on it."[50]

Not only is Scripture sufficient apart from the creeds, but it is also perspicuous. "The truth of faith is sufficiently plain in the teaching of Christ and the Apostles." It is only because "wicked men have wrested apostolic teaching and the other Scriptures to their own destruction, [that] declaration of the faith against those impugning it is needed from time to time."[51]

The need for a creed arises out of the fact that "the truth of faith is contained in sacred Scripture, but diffusely, in divers ways and, sometimes, darkly." Hence, "the result is that to draw out that truth of faith from Scripture requires a prolonged study and a practice not within the capacities of all those who need to know the truth of faith. . . . That is why there was a need to draw succinctly together out of the Scriptural teaching some clear statement to be set before all for their belief."[52]

The Interpretation of Scripture

Although no comprehensive treatment of Aquinas's hermeneutics can be offered here, several aspects of it are worthy of brief comment. Much has been written about the widespread proof texting and allegorizing

of medieval hermeneutics. These charges are widely misapplied to Aquinas. In actual fact, Aquinas was guilty of neither.

Aquinas expended a great deal of effort elaborating and utilizing good principles of interpretation. He possessed the best concordances and dictionaries of the day.[53] Although his busy academic career afforded him little time for the study of the original languages, he showed a critical concern to determine the best text available. As for general rules of interpretation, his commentary on Aristotle's hermeneutics, *On Interpretation*, is a classic. In *Against the Error of the Greeks*, "he presents far-reaching rules of interpretation that bear the mark of a lofty intellectual honesty as well as a historical sense of the development of dogma and of the great relativism that formulas and words have from one language to another."[54] Likewise, in his commentaries on the Gospels and Epistles Aquinas spells out numerous helpful hermeneutical rules.

The Literal Sense of Scripture

Contrary to a popular misconception, Aquinas believed in the literal interpretation of Scripture. As Lamb observes, "none of the Fathers who were to influence medieval exegesis declared the sufficiency of the literal sense; nor did any of the commentators or theologians prior to St. Thomas."[55] Most of them believed in a literal sense of Scripture, but they declared it at best only a stepping stone to the "higher" spiritual sense.[56] Aquinas, on the other hand, believed so firmly in the literal sense of Scripture that he sometimes refused to comment on anything but that sense.[57]

For Aquinas the literal sense (*sensus literalis*) is the basic sense of all Scripture. He declares that "nothing false can underlie the literal sense of Scripture."[58] Any non-literal sense of Scripture must be based in the literal sense. For example, "the parabolic sense is contained in the literal sense. . . . When the Scripture speaks of the arm of God, the literal sense is not that he has a physical limb, but that he [literally] has what it signifies, namely the power of doing and making." [59] While Aquinas seeks the literal meaning of the text, however, he is not literalistic in translating the text. In fact, he censors word-for-word translations."[60]

Sensus Unum or Sensus Plenior

Is there only one sense to Scripture or are there many? On this controversial issue Aquinas's view is unique. Like most medieval interpreters, Aquinas held that there are other senses of Scripture besides the literal, but unlike them he insisted that these senses are all contained in and dependent on the literal sense. For the "first meaning whereby the words signify things belongs to the sense first mentioned, namely the historical or literal."[61] This, of course, does not mean that there are no other senses of Scripture. In fact, Aquinas delineates four:

> (1) The literal or historical sense—the sense intended by the sacred author, the realities signified through the words of Scripture;
>
> (2) The allegorical or typical sense—the realities of the Old Testament signifying those of the New Testament, Christ, and his church;
>
> (3) The moral or tropological sense—the events of Christ's life and those who prefigured him, signifying what Christians should do and how they should live;
>
> (4) The anagogical or eschatological sense—the New Testament realities signifying those of the kingdom that is to come.[62]

Aquinas notes that the spiritual sense of Scripture is based on and presupposes the literal sense. In *Quodlibetum* (VII, 15, ad 3) he declares that "the spiritual explanation must always be based on the literal."[63] All four senses are not found in all of Scripture. The allegorical sense is brought into play when the things of the Old Law signify the things of the New Law; the moral sense when the things done in Christ and in those who prefigured him are signs of what we should carry out; and the anagogical sense when the things that lie ahead in eternal glory are signified.[64]

All other "spiritual" senses of Scripture are based on and included in the literal sense. One of the greatest contributions Aquinas made to hermeneutics was to insist on the sufficiency of the literal meaning. In fact, "the literal is the only sense on which theological arguments can be based."[65] As Aquinas puts it, "nothing that is necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not openly conveyed by the literal sense elsewhere."[66]

When all is said and done, Aquinas believes that there is really only one basic sense to Scripture—the literal sense. He insists that "when Scripture has more than one sense, it cannot be used as a basis of argumentation." What is more, "these senses [of Holy Scripture] are not manifold because one word would have many senses. . . . *All the senses are based on one, namely the literal."*[67]

A Literal Understanding of Messianic Prophecy

One of the offshoots of Aquinas's stress on the literal understanding of Scripture is his insistence that some prophetic passages have Christ alone as their literal meaning. He goes so far as to say that to deny passages like Isaiah 7:14 are prophetic ("A virgin will conceive . . .") is heretical.[68] More than once Aquinas reproaches Theodore of Mopsuestia for allegedly denying that any Old Testament text could refer literally to Christ.[69] If this were the case, Aquinas argues, then the phrase "That it might be fulfilled" would mean "that it might be accommodated."[70] Aquinas sees clearly that the New Testament makes an evidential use of Old Testament predictive prophecy, without which Christians would have no apologetic against the Jews.[71]

Aquinas, unlike previous commentators, does not interpret the Old Testament ceremonial precepts in an allegorical way, as referring to New Testament mysteries. On the contrary, they generally have literal, historical meaning that the Jewish people could understand.[72]

The Influence of Aristotle

It is well known that Aquinas was profoundly influenced by Aristotle. Less well known is how this pointed him away from the Platonic tendency to allegorize Scripture to a firm commitment to a literal understanding of the Bible. For Aristotle, contrary to Plato, all knowledge begins with sense experience. Because of this, "the world and history take on their own value, they are not just symbolic of a higher realm."[73] Thus, "the contrast between St. Augustine [who depended heavily on Plato] and the newly recovered Aristotle . . . was bound to have a disturbing effect on his study of the Creator's special book. Aristotle caused him to see Scripture as freshly as he saw all creation."[74]

Before Aquinas "there existed a Platonic atmosphere in Christian thinking which disposed commentators to regard the biblical text as merely

the necessary shell or veil that had to be pierced in order to get at the inner, nobler, spiritual message."[75] But Aquinas's adoption of the Aristotelian doctrine concerning the dependence of the human mind on the imagination threw a new light on the importance of the literal sense of Scripture.[76] As long as medieval views of knowing were tied to looking for some inner spiritual meaning behind the mere symbols of words, there was little hope of uncovering the literal meaning of Scripture. Once Aquinas, following Aristotle, stressed that all knowledge begins in sensible images that truly inform us about the real material creation that reflects God, then a truly literal understanding of the words of Scripture was possible. As Smalley observes, "this shift in psychological presuppositions was bound to make itself felt in exegetical principles. Greater stress was placed on the role of the imagination or phantasm [sense images] in prophecy. . . . Another effect was a change in attitude toward the literal sense."[77]

The Author's Meaning

For Aquinas "the literal sense is that which the author intends, and the author of holy Scripture is God."[78] So the literal meaning of Scripture is what God meant by it through the human authors. And while the human authors did not always understand all the implications of their own writings, what they affirmed is what God intended, and what God intended is what they affirmed. Aquinas insists that "we must keep to that which has been written in Scripture. We must add nothing to it, detract nothing, and change nothing by interpreting it badly."[79]

For Aquinas, the "proper meaning of a word . . . that precious quality through which the word conveys intelligibility (*ratio nominis*), is either limited, confined, or corrected by usage. Since usage reveals their intended significance, this is a richer source for their being understood than their original meaning can be."[80] Aquinas insists that "etymology and meaning are quite different. The etymology of a word indicates something of its origin; the meaning, on the other hand, is supposed to convey the reality which here and now corresponds to it."[81]

A Text in Context

Aquinas, who would agree that "a text out of context is a pretext," makes a concerted effort to be both critical and analytical about the Scripture he cites in support of his views. He believes firmly that the Bible is its own best interpreter. As Van der Ploeg observes, "the first exegetical

rule for St. Thomas was, apparently, to explain the Bible by the Bible, and therefore many passages of his exegetical works, especially the earlier ones, . . . consist more of biblical text than of the text of the author."[82] It is from this, no doubt, that Aquinas gained the reputation that he "knew the Bible by heart." It is impossible here to provide an in-depth study of Aquinas's use of Scripture, but some general observations are relevant.[83]

First, his exegesis of Scripture does not follow the reader's interest but, rather, the very structure of the text as presented by the author. Aquinas follows the "internal order governing the development of the text and the arrangement of its parts."[84] In order to do this, Aquinas divides the text first into broad sections, then into smaller pericopes, and finally into sentences. In short, Aquinas undertakes a grammatical analysis of the objective text of Scripture.

Second, Aquinas advocates a closely knit exegesis of the text's words and statements, counter to the paraphrase's facileness. In this way, "he is compelled . . . to stick constantly to the letter, to extract its immediate meaning, in order to arrive at a grasp of the thought."[85] In this Aquinas follows Hugh of Saint Victor, according to whom there were the words and their connected consequences (the *littera*), then the obvious meaning (*sensus*), and finally the understanding (*sententia*) provided by the complete exposition (*expositio*).[86]

Third, Aquinas's exposition is highly analytic. The thirteenth century was preoccupied with reason. This is manifested in the exposition of Scripture. Aquinas, for example, tends to define words and concepts, and to classify them within categories provided by his extensive knowledge of philosophy. As Chenu notes of Aquinas's exposition of Scripture, if he comes upon the word *oblatio*, he analyzes the four conditions required for an offering [cf. Matt. 5:23]; the word *timor,* he recalls to mind the different species of fear [cf. John 15:15]; the particle *per,* he observes that this preposition denotes indirect causality [cf. John 1:3]; and so on.[87]

Aquinas presents much of his analysis in terms of the four causes[88] (efficient, material, formal, and final) as did Albert the Great and Bonaventure. This has the effect of clarifying issues and opening up new avenues for discovering the true meaning of the text.

Fourth, Aquinas's "quest is for reasons, the reasons for things, for events, for words, for steps taken. Always it is supposed that the evangelist

or the prophet had reasons in mind."[89] For example, Aquinas's commentary on Job purports to show probable reasons that providence governs human affairs. The short phrase, "and he posits two reasons," is the means by which Aquinas frequently uncovers the logical connections of a narrative (e.g., Matt. 21:12; 24:27). In Romans he identifies syllogisms (cf. 8:5-6) and in other places the propositions of an argument (e.g., John 7:7). All in all, Aquinas's exposition of Scripture is faithful to the scholastic quest to render the credible intelligible.

Finally, Aquinas moves from the exposition to the question. The disputed question was an essential aspect of medieval education. It was often introduced by phrases like, "the question arises here," or "there is here a twofold question." In this way there is a natural movement from exegesis to theology, the queen of the sciences. But theology is to be based on the text and to grow out of it, not to be artificially superimposed on it. Indeed, it is to be based on a literal understanding of the text in its historical-grammatical context. A good example of how Aquinas roots his profound theological insights in the grammar of the text is found in the prologue of his commentary on John's Gospel.

The Use of Scripture in the Summa Theologiae

A direct elaboration of Scripture is manifest in three sections of the *Summa theologiae.* Genesis is expounded in the treatise on creation.[90] The books of the Law are utilized heavily in Aquinas's treatment of ancient law.[91] The Gospels are referred to in his treatise on the life of Christ.[92] In these contexts the use of Scripture clearly goes beyond mere exegesis. While the scriptural data is organized around doctrinal categories, Aquinas endeavors to draw conclusions that are consistent with the literal meaning of the text, with a great measure of success. In any event, the hundreds of citations of Scripture reveal the thoroughly biblical nature of his theology as well as his vast knowledge of Scripture. In this regard Chenu is correct when he notes that Aquinas's "systematic *Summa* is implanted and fed with a continuous study of Scripture . . . and that its most perfect rational structures are never an end, but a means to arrive at a better knowledge of the Word of God."[93]

Like virtually every other area of Aquinas's thought, after seven hundred years there is still much to learn from his use of Scripture. Except for the question of the extent of the canon, Aquinas's basic view of the

nature and interpretation of Scripture is as orthodox and "Protestant" as that of any of the Reformers. Indeed, they are largely indebted to him for their view. Aquinas believed in the verbal, plenary inspiration of the very words of Scripture. He held to the orthodox understanding of infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture, yet avoided the pitfalls of mechanical dictation. He provided fresh insight into the divine-human relation in the production of Scripture by his appeal to primary-secondary causality. In all of this he gave full weight to the humanness of Scripture, acknowledging the use of human sources and literal forms.

On the matter of interpretation he stood firmly on the side of a literal meaning of Scripture, rooted in the expressed intention (meaning) of the author. Aquinas, like others, occasionally lapsed into an allegorical interpretation. He opposed such in principle, however, and avoided it in practice with surprising consistency. His exegetical method was both objective and grammatical. Yet he did not hesitate to make use of this literal meaning in the construction of his theology. All in all, his understanding and use of Scripture, although far from perfect, were superior for his time and are exemplary for ours.

Pius XII was not far from the mark when he proclaimed:

> In the opinion of men of the finest judgment, the commentaries that St. Thomas wrote on the books of the Old and the New Testaments, and especially on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle, reflect such authority, such a keen insight and such diligence that they can be counted among his greatest theological works, and are considered in the nature of a biblical complement to these works, one to be held in the highest esteem. And thus if anyone should neglect them, he cannot be said to enjoy a clear and thoroughgoing acquaintance with the knowledge of the Angelic Doctor.[94]

THE RELATION BETWEEN FAITH AND REASON is one of the most basic problems for any thinking believer. Should we accept God's Word, the Bible, by faith, or are there reasons for believing it? Does reason precede faith, or does faith precede reason? Should we believe without reasons? Are there reasons for believing? Should we seek reasons for our faith, or does this diminish the merits of faith? These and many more questions are treated by Aquinas throughout his writings.

The Relation Between Faith and Reason

Aquinas holds that faith and reason are interrelated. Faith uses reason, and reason cannot go it alone without faith. Both are necessary, but each in its own order.

Reason Cannot Produce Faith

Reason accompanies but does not cause faith. "Faith is called a consent without inquiry in so far as the consent of faith, or assent, is not caused by an investigation of the understanding." Faith is produced by God. Commenting on Ephesians 2:8-9, Aquinas contends that "free will is inadequate for the act of faith since the contents of faith are above reason. . . . That a man should believe, therefore, cannot occur from himself unless God gives it."[1] Faith is a gift of God; no one can believe without it.

Nonetheless, "this does not prevent the understanding of one who believes from having some discursive thought of comparison about those things which he believes."[2] Discursive thought, or reasoning from premises to conclusions, is not the cause of the assent of faith. Nonetheless, such reasoning "can accompany the assent of faith."[3] The reason they are parallel but one does not cause the other is that "faith involves will (freedom) and reason doesn't coerce the will."[4] That is, a person is free to dissent even though there may be convincing reasons to believe.

In proclaiming Christian truth to others, if the authority of Scripture is not accepted, then appeal can be made to reason. "Thus, against the Jews we are able to argue by means of the Old Testament, while against heretics we are able to argue by means of the New Testament. But Mohammedans and the pagans accept neither the one nor the other." Aquinas concludes that

"we must, therefore, have recourse to the natural reason, to which all men are forced to give their assent."[5]

Some truths of the Christian faith are attainable by human reason: "Such are that God exists, that He is one, and the like. In fact, such truths about God have been proved demonstratively by the philosophers, guided by the light of the natural reason."[6]

The Uses of Reason in Christian Faith

Aquinas believes that philosophy can be used in sacred teaching in three ways. [7] First, "we can use it to demonstrate the preambles of faith . . . for example, that God exists, that God is one, or similar propositions concerning God or creatures that faith proposes as having been proved in philosophy." Second, "we can use philosophy to make known through certain likenesses what belongs to faith, as Augustine in his book *On the Trinity* uses many likenesses drawn from the teachings of the philosophers to explain the Trinity. Third, we can use philosophy to oppose what is said against faith, either by showing that these things are false or by showing that they are not necessary."

In brief, human reason can be used to prove natural theology (e.g., the existence and nature of one God), to illustrate supernatural theology (e.g., the Trinity and incarnation), and to refute false theologies (heresies).[8]

There are two levels of divine truth. In order to make the first kind of divine truth known, we must proceed through demonstrative arguments by which our adversaries may become convinced. Since such arguments are not available for the second kind of divine truth, however, our intention should not be to convince our adversaries by arguments. It should be to answer their arguments against the truth, for, as we have shown, the natural reason cannot be contrary to the truth of faith. The sole way to overcome an adversary of divine truth is from the authority of Scripture—an authority divinely confirmed by miracles. For that which is above the human reason we believe only because God has revealed it. Nevertheless, there are certain likely (probable) arguments that should be adduced in order to make divine truth known.

God's existence is self-evident absolutely (in itself) but not relatively (to us). Hence, it "is necessary for man to receive by faith not only things which are above reason, but also those which can be known by reason." Furthermore, without faith we would lack certitude. "For human reason is

very deficient in things concerning God. . . . Consequently, in order that men might have knowledge of God, free of doubt and uncertainty, it was necessary for divine truth to be delivered by them by way of faith, being told to them as it were, by God Himself Who cannot lie."[9]

Divine Authority as the Basis of Faith

Reason in itself cannot provide the basis for believing in God. It can prove *that* God exists, but it cannot convince unbelievers to believe *in* God.[10] We may believe (assent without reservation) something that is neither self-evident nor deduced from it (where the intellect is moved) by a movement of the will. This does not mean, however, that reason plays no role prior to belief. We must judge a revelation to be worthy before we believe it. For people will not believe unless they see that something is worthy of belief on the basis of evident signs or the like.[11] Indeed, reason inquires about what is to be believed before it believes in it. In Aquinas's words, "faith does not involve a search by natural reason to prove what is believed. But it does involve a form of enquiry unto things by which a person is led to belief, e.g. whether they are spoken by God and confirmed by miracles."[12]

Demons, for example, are convinced by the evidence that God exists, but it "is not their wills which bring demons to assent to what they are said to believe. Rather, they are forced by the evidence of signs which convince them that what the faithful believe is true." Yet "these signs do not cause the appearance of what is believed so that the demons could on this account be said to see those things which are believed. Therefore, belief is predicated equivocally of men who believe and of demons."[13]

In order to believe in God one must have the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit. For "one who believes does have a sufficient motive for believing, namely the authority of God's teaching, confirmed by miracles, and—what is greater—the inner inspiration [*instinctus*] of God inviting him to believe."[14] As to voluntary assent in matters of faith, we can look to two types of causes. "One is a cause that persuades from without, for example, a miracle witnessed or a human appeal urging belief. No such cause is enough, however; one man believes and another does not, when both have seen the same miracle, heard the same preaching. Another kind of cause must therefore be present, an inner cause; one that influences a person inwardly to assent to the things of faith." "The assent of faith, which is its

principal act, therefore, has as its cause God, moving us inwardly through grace." This "belief is, of course, a matter of the believer's will, but a person's will needs to be prepared by God through his grace in order to be lifted up to what surpasses nature."[15]

Human Reason Used to Support Faith

Commenting on the use of "reason" in 1 Peter 3:15, Aquinas argues that "human reasoning in support of what we believe may stand in a two-fold relation to the will of the believer. First, as preceding the act of the will, as, for instance, when a man either has not the will, or not a prompt will, to believe, unless he be moved by human reason; and in this way human reasoning diminishes the merit of faith . . . he ought to believe matters of faith, not because of human reasoning, but because of the divine authority." Second, "human reasons may be consequent to the will of the believer. For when a man has a will ready to believe, he loves the truth he believes, he thinks out and takes to heart whatever reasons he can find in support thereof; and in this way, human reasoning does not exclude the merit of faith, but is a sign of greater merit."[16]

Faith is supported by, although not based on, probable evidence. "Those who place their faith in this truth, however, 'for which the human reason offers no experimental evidence,' do not believe foolishly, as though 'following artificial fables." Rather, "it reveals its own presence, as well as the truth of its teaching and inspiration, by fitting arguments; and in order to confirm those truths that exceed natural knowledge, it gives visible manifestations to works that surpass the ability of all nature." The kind of positive evidence that Aquinas cites as supportive of faith includes things like raising the dead, the conversion of the world to Christianity, and miracles. The negative evidence encompasses arguments against false religions, including their appeal to carnal pleasures, contradictory teachings, fables and falsities, and perversion of Old and New Testament stories.[17]

How can we be sure when the support for our faith rests on many intermediary (fallible) testimonies? Aquinas responds: "All the intermediaries through which faith comes to us are above suspicion. We believe the prophets and apostles because the Lord has been their witness by performing miracles, as Mark says [16:20]." Furthermore, "we believe the successors of the apostles and prophets only in so far as they tell us those things which the apostles and prophets have left in their writings."[18]

The Bible alone is the final and infallible authority for our faith (see Chap. 4).

Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of rational arguments. "Demonstrative, cogent, and intellectual convincing argument cannot lay hold of the truths of faith, though it may neutralize destructive criticism that would render faith untenable." On the other hand, "persuasive reasoning drawn from probabilities . . . does not weaken the merit of faith, for it implies no attempt to convert faith into sight by resolving what is believed into evident first principles."[19]

The Distinction Between Faith and Reason.

As some, like Francis Schaeffer, have mistakenly argued, Aquinas does not actually separate faith and reason, although he does formally distinguish between them. He believes they are related, but the relationship is not coercive.

Faith Described in Relation to Reason

Human reason does not force faith. If it did, faith would not be a free act. What happens is that "the mind of the one believing settles upon the one side of a question not in virtue of his reason but in virtue of his will. Therefore assent is understood in the definition [of faith] as an act of the mind in so far as the mind is brought to its decision by the will."[20]

This does not mean that faith is unreasonable. Faith is reason with assent. For "to ponder with assent is, then, distinctive of the believer: this is how his act of belief is set off from all other acts of the mind concerned with the true and the false."[21]

Faith, then, is defined as "that habit of mind whereby eternal life begins in us and which brings the mind to assent to things that appear not." Faith differs from science in that its object is unseen. Faith also differs from doubt, suspicion, and opinion in that there is evidence to support it.

Aquinas quotes Augustine with approval: "faith is a virtue by which things not seen are believed."[22] He declares that "to believe is an act of mind assenting to the divine truth by virtue of the command of the will as this is moved by God through grace; in this the act stands under control of free will and is directed toward God. The act of faith is, therefore, meritorious. That is, to say one is rewarded for believing in what he does not see. There is no merit in believing what can be seen, since there is no faith involved; it

can be seen. The scientist [i.e., philosopher] is impelled to assent by force of a conclusive proof. Thus the assent is not meritorious."[23]

Faith is an act of mind and will. Aquinas writes: "We have determined that belief is an act of the intellect under the impetus of the will moving it to assent; belief thus issues from both mind and will, each of which, as has been shown, is of its nature perfectible by the training of habit. If an act of faith is to be completely good, then, habits must necessarily be present in both mind and will."[24] That is, we cannot be saved unless we are willing to do something with our faith. Saving faith will produce good works.

The Meritorious Nature of Faith

Faith is meritorious because it involves the will to believe.[25] It "depends on the will according to its very nature. It is for this reason that to believe can be meritorious, and that faith . . . is a virtue for the theologian."[26] "For in science and opinion [probable arguments] there is no inclination because of the will, but only because of reason."[27] But "no act can be meritorious unless it is voluntary, as has been said."[28]

Aquinas believes that Hebrews 11:1 is a good definition of faith, for it not merely describes what faith does but what it is. He sees in it the three essentials of a good definition:

First, from the fact that it mentions all the principles on which the nature of faith depends . . . [namely, the will, the object (good) which moves will, etc.]. The second . . . is that through it we can distinguish faith from everything else, namely, of those things which appear not (as opposed to science and understanding). The third [is] . . . that . . . the whole definition or some part must be put in other words, namely, "substance of things hoped for."[29]

The Formal Distinction between Faith and Reason

Although Aquinas does not actually separate faith and reason, he does distinguish them formally. We cannot both know and believe the same thing at the same time. For "whatever things we know with scientific knowledge properly so called we know by reducing them to first principles which are naturally present to the understanding. All scientific knowledge terminates in the sight of a thing which is present [whereas faith is always in something absent]. Hence, it is impossible to have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing."[30]

The object of faith is above the senses and understanding. "Consequently, the object of faith is that which is absent from our understanding." As Augustine said, we believe that which is absent, but we see that which is present.[31] So we cannot prove and believe the same thing. For "all science [philosophical knowledge] is derived from self-evident and therefore seen principles. . . . Now, . . . it is impossible that one and the same thing should be believed and seen by the same person." This does means "that a thing which is an object of vision or science for one, is believed by another."[32] It does not mean that one and the same person can have both faith and proof of one and the same object. If one sees it, then he does not believe it on the testimony of others. And if he believes it on the testimony of another, then he does not see (know) it for himself.

Likewise, one cannot have "opinion" (probable knowledge) and "science" (certain knowledge) about the same object. As Aquinas notes, it does not seem possible for a person simultaneously to have scientific knowledge and opinion about the same thing, for opinion includes a fear that the other part [of the contradiction] is true, and scientific knowledge excludes such fear. Similarly, it is impossible to have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing.

This fear that the opposite may be true, however, does not apply to matters of faith. For faith brings with it a greater certitude than does reason.[33]

If the existence of God can be proved by reason and if what is known by reason cannot also be a matter of faith, then why is belief in God proposed in the creed? Aquinas responds that not all of us are capable of demonstrating God's existence. "We do not say that the proposition, God is one, in so far as it is proved by demonstration, is an article of faith, but something presupposed before the articles. For the knowledge of faith presupposes natural knowledge, just as grace presupposes nature."[34]

Reason, however, can only go so far. The act of believing depends on the understanding and will. This act cannot be perfect unless the will is made perfect by love and the understanding by faith. Since love is the perfection of the will, faith is formed and perfected by love.[35]

Not only is love necessary to perfect faith, but grace is necessary to produce it. "Now, grace is the first [i.e., remote] perfection of the virtues, but charity is their proximate perfection."[36]

The Limitations of Reason

Contrary to a popular opinion, Aquinas does not believe that human reason is without limitations. In fact, he offers many arguments why reason is insufficient and revelation is needed.[37]

Reasons for Revelation

Following the famous Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides,[38] Aquinas sets forth five reasons why we must first believe what we may later be able to provide good evidence for.

The first reason is the depth and subtlety of these objects of knowledge which are farthest removed from the senses. . . . The second reason is the weakness of human understanding when it begins to operate. The third is the number of things needed for a conclusive proof of these. A man can learn them only after a long time. The fourth reason is the disinclination for scientific investigation which some men have because they lack the proper temperament. The fifth is the need of engaging in other occupations to provide the necessities of life.

From this it is clear that "if it were necessary to use a strict demonstration as the only way to reach a knowledge of the things which we must know about God, very few could ever construct such a demonstration and even these could do it only after a long time." And "from this it is evident that the provision of the way of faith, which gives all easy access to salvation at any time, is beneficial to man."

To summarize, human reason is inadequate and divine revelation is essential because of: (1) the depth and subtlety of the object [God], who is far from being an ordinary sense object; (2) the weakness of human intellect in its initial operations; (3) the length of time required to learn the things needed for a conclusive proof; (4) the fact that some people lack proper personality to engage in rigorous philosophical pursuit; and (5) the lack of time for philosophy beyond pursuit of the necessities of life.[39]

Aquinas explains in some detail why divine revelation is needed. First, "few men would possess the knowledge of God. . . . [1] Some do not have the physical disposition for such work. . . . [2] Others are cut off from pursuing this truth by the necessities imposed upon them by their daily lives. . . . [3] Finally, there are some who are cut off by indolence.

"The second awkward effect is that those who would come to discover the above mentioned truth would barely reach it after a great deal

of time. The reasons are several. [1] There is the profundity of this truth. . . . [2] Then, there are many things that must be presupposed, as we said. [3] There is also the fact that, in youth, when the soul is swayed by the various movements of the passions, it is not in a suitable state for the knowledge of such lofty truth. . . .”

"The third awkward effect is this. The investigation of the human intellect for the most part has falsity present within it, [a] and this is due partly to the weakness of our intellect in judgment, [b] and partly to the admixture of images. . . . [c] Furthermore, with the many truths that are demonstrated, there sometimes is mingled something that is false, which is not demonstrated but rather asserted on the basis of some probable or sophistical argument. . . . That is why it was necessary that the unshakable certitude and pure truth concerning divine things should be presented to men by way of faith."[40] In short, human reason is limited by nature, circumstances, and operation. Thus, for certitude in divine things faith is necessary.

The Effect of Sin on the Mind

Another widely held but mistaken view is that Aquinas believes the mind is finite but not fallen. On the contrary, he clearly states that the mind falls far short when it comes to the things of God. For "the searching of natural reason does not fill mankind's need to know even those divine realities which reason could prove. Belief in them is not, therefore, superfluous."[41] Aquinas asserts emphatically that human reason is very deficient in things concerning God. A sign of this is that philosophers, in their inquiry into human affairs by natural investigation, have fallen into many errors, and have disagreed among themselves. And consequently, in order that men might have knowledge of God, free of doubt and uncertainty, it was necessary for divine truths to be delivered to them by way of faith, being told to them as it were, by God himself Who cannot lie.[42]

As a result of the noetic effects of sin, grace is needed. Thus we must say that for the knowledge of any truth, man needs divine assistance so that his intellect may be moved by God to actualize itself. He does not, however, need a new light, supplementing his natural light, in order to know truth in all cases, but only in certain cases which transcend natural knowledge. And yet by his grace God sometimes miraculously instructs

some men about things which can be known by natural reason, just as he sometimes does miraculously what nature can do. . . . But the human intellect cannot know more profound intelligible realities unless it is perfected by a stronger light, say the light of faith or prophecy; and this is called the light of grace, in as much as it supplements nature.[43]

Aquinas concludes that "if for something to be in our power means that we can do it without the help of grace, then we are bound to many things that are not within our power without healing grace—for example to love God or neighbor." Further, "the same is true of believing in the articles of faith. But with the help of grace we do have this power. As Augustine says, to whomever this help is given by God it is given in mercy; to whomever it is denied, it is denied in justice, namely because of previous sin, even if only original sin."[44]

Aquinas does not believe, however, that sin has completely destroyed our rational ability. Rather, he insists that "sin cannot destroy man's rationality altogether, for then he would no longer be capable of sin."[45] He believes in the Fall of mankind and inherited sin called "original sin." He spoke of the inevitability to sin for fallen human beings, but he also held that by God's grace each sin in particular could be resisted. He wrote: "but I the state of corrupted nature man needs grace to heal his nature in order that he may entirely abstain from sin" (ST 1a.109.8). As pervasive as sin is in mankind, "The capital [most] of human nature diminished by sin is the natural inclination to virtue instinctive in man as a rational being…. Now sin cannot destroy man's rationality altogether, for then he would no longer be capable of sin" (ST1a-2ae.85.1). He adds, "But sin does not strike at the root, sine it does not diminish nature itself; what it does is to block the ability [ibid.] from reaching its end; the disability consists in the interposition of a barrier. Thus, there can be an infinite lessening of virtue, for always another layer can be added, as when man piles sin on sin. Yet the instinct for right action always remains radically intact" (ST1a-2e.85.2). In brief, sin cannot be so great on human nature so that it destroys the human ability to sin. Sin cannot erase the image of God; it can only efface it.

Like Augustine, Thomas held that "the man who misuses free will destroys both himself and it" (Aquinas, OP, Q. 6, Objection 23). So, "the sinner has lost free will so far as concerns freedom from fault and misery, but not so far as concerns freedom from compulsion" (Aquinas, OP, Q. 6, Reply 23).

Things above Reason

Not only is faith necessary because of human depravity, but also because some things simply fall beyond the power of reason. Pasnau correctly notes that "Aquinas also believes that certain truths about God's nature are beyond the scope of natural reason. He says plain, for example, that "some truths about God exceed every capacity of human reason (SCG I.3.4/14)." (Pasnau, *The Philosophy of Aquinas*, 82). However, by "beyond reason" Aquinas does not mean what is contrary to reason, but simply what cannot be comprehended by reason. They are the "things which are beyond the comprehension of reason, and so to this extent seem to contradict reason, although they do not really oppose it. In a similar way, to an unlettered person it seems contrary to reason to say that the sun is larger than the earth. . . . However, these appear reasonable to those who are educated.[46]

"Beyond reason" does not mean unreasonable or even without all reason. For "faith . . . is said to surpass reason, not because there is no act of reason in faith, but because reasoning about faith cannot lead to the sight of those things which are matters of faith."[47]

We must have faith when the light of grace is stronger than the light of nature. For "although the divinely infused light is more powerful than natural light, in our present state we do not share it perfectly, but imperfectly." Therefore, "because of this defective participation, through that infused light itself we are not brought to the vision of those things for the knowledge of which it was given us. But we will have it in heaven when we share that light perfectly and in the light of God we will see light."[48]

Faith, then, surpasses reason. For "some truths about God exceed all the ability of the human reason. Such is the truth that God is triune." But "there are some truths which the natural reason also is able to reach. Such are that God exists, that he is one, and the like. In fact such truths about God have been proved demonstratively by the philosophers, guided by the light of the natural reason."[49]

Of course, the ineffable essence of God cannot be known by human reason. "For the human intellect is not able to reach a comprehension of the divine substance through its natural powers." The reason for this is that "in the present life, the intellect depends on the senses for the origin of knowledge. . . . Now, sensible things cannot lead the human intellect to the

point of seeing in them the nature of the divine substance; for sensible things are effects that fall short of the power of their cause."[50]

Just because we may have no reasons for things that go "beyond reason" does not mean these are not rational. "For everything which must be believed, if it is not self-evident, there is an argument which is not only probable but necessary, yet our diligence may not uncover that argument."[51] Hence, "for us, the arguments for matters of faith are unknown, although they are known to God and to the blessed who have vision and not faith about these things."[52]

While human reason cannot attain to the things of faith, it is the preface to it. For even though "philosophical truths cannot be opposed to truths of faith, they fall short indeed yet they also admit common analogies; and some moreover are fore-shadowings, for nature is the preface of grace."[53]

	Faith and Reason	
Reason before Faith in God	**Reason during Faith in God**	**Reason after Faith in God**
1. Proves that God exists (preamble of faith)	1. Never **basis** or cause of faith	1. Never as **basis** of faith (authority is **basis** of faith)
2. Disproves nontheisms (**alternatives** to faith)	2. May **accompany** or parallel faith	But **in support of** faith by • probable evidence • miracles • utility • analogy

3. Shows consistency of Christianity **(vs. attacks on** faith)		
(Consent is caused by **mind)**	(Consent is caused by **will)**	
Reasoning--	Reasoning--	Reasoning--
1. **About** faith, not **to** faith **in** God	1. **In** the act of faith in God	1. In support of faith (not as a basis of faith in God)
2. **To** faith **that** God is	2. **About** faith in God (not **for** faith in God)	2. And **for** faith in God
	3. And **for** faith **that** God exists	3. And **basis** for faith that God exists

"Above reason" can have two meanings. The phrase can mean "above reason absolutely" (i.e., above human intellectual capacity). For example, it is impossible to have knowledge of the Trinity by human reason apart from special revelation. We believe in the triune God only on the basis of his own testimony. "Above reason" can also mean "above reason not absolutely" (i.e., not completely above human intellectual capacity). For example, we can have philosophical proofs for a statement like "God exists."[54]

Faith, then, does not oppose reason. For "although the truth of the Christian faith which we have discussed surpasses the capacity of the reason, nevertheless that truth that the human reason is naturally endowed to know cannot be opposed to the truth of the Christian faith."[55]

Faith, Reason, and Certitude

Aquinas distinguishes four levels of certainty and uncertainty: doubt, suspicion, opinion, and certitude.[56] It is noteworthy to observe that if we could reason as the basis of faith, then faith would not be a free act; it would be consent caused by the mind.

Aquinas's view of the relation of faith and reason is a unique blend of the positive elements of both rationalism and fideism, of presuppositionalism and evidentialism. He stresses the need for reason before, during, and after believing. Even the mysteries of faith are not irrational. On the other hand, he does not believe that reason alone can bring us to faith in God. This is accomplished only by the grace of God. Indeed, faith can never be *based on* reason. At best it can only be *supported by* reason. Thus, reason and evidence are never coercive of faith. There is always room for unbelievers not to believe in God, even though a believer can construct a valid proof that God exists. For reason can be used to demonstrate that God exists, but it can never in itself persuade someone to believe in God. Only God can do this, working by his grace in and through free choice.

Aquinas's distinctions are eminently relevant to the contemporary discussion between rationalists and fideists or between evidentialists and presuppositionalists. With regard to belief *that* God exists, Aquinas sides with the evidentialist. But with respect to belief *in* God, he agrees with the *fideist*. This unique synthesis of faith and reason provides further reasons to believe that old Aquinas should not be forgotten.

BEHIND THE CHRISTIAN BELIEF that God has revealed himself to us in Scripture (John 10:34-35) and nature (Rom. 1:19-20) is the conviction that knowledge about God is possible. With this the Christian as a believer is content. The Christian, however, also operates as a thinker, and so must ask the question: How do we know? Aquinas's answer is that we know by means of basic principles of knowledge. There are certain fundamental axioms of thought by which thought is possible. For we cannot build a house of knowledge unless there is a foundation on which to erect it. Aquinas calls these foundational principles of knowing first principles.

The Importance of the First Principles

Aquinas believes that all knowledge is based on basic undeniable principles that provide the foundation for sure knowledge. Without these first principles there can be no true knowledge. As he puts it, "perfect knowledge requires certitude, and this is why we cannot be said to know unless we know what cannot be otherwise."[1] That is, if there is to be certainty, then knowledge must be based ultimately on some principles about which there can be no question. This means that there can be no infinite regress in our knowledge, for "if there were an infinite regress in demonstrations, demonstration would be impossible, because the conclusion of any demonstration is made certain by reducing it to the first principle of demonstration."[2] All knowledge, then, rests on certain undeniable first principles that we must study if we are to avoid ultimate skepticism.

The Meaning of the First Principles

In order to understand what the first principles of knowledge are, it is necessary to understand first what is meant by a principle. Then, the nature of first principles as "first" will be more readily understood.

The Definition of a Principle

According to Aquinas, "anything whence something proceeds in any way we call a principle."[3] That is, a principle is that from which something follows. A principle is to be distinguished from a cause, which is that from which something else follows in dependence. A cause, in distinction from a

principle, has diversity of substance and dependence of one on another, which is not implied in the principle. For in all kinds of causes there is always to be found between the cause and the effect a distance of perfection or of power: whereas we use the term *principle* even in things which have no such difference, but have only a certain order to each other; as when we say that a point is the principle of a line.[4]

So, then, there are two basic differences between a cause and a principle. First, a cause is not part of the effect, whereas a principle can be part of that which proceeds from it. Second, a principle is merely that from which something follows; a cause is that from which something follows in dependence.

The Definition of a First Principle

A principle, by its very nature, is the first in its order, since all else within that order follows from it. "A first principle is, therefore, a first among firsts."[5] It may be first in the order of knowing, being, or becoming. That is, each of the various orders of knowledge or reality have their points of beginning; these are known as first principles if they have that irreducible premise upon which all else depends in that order. There may be other principles under this first principle, but the first principle is that from which conclusions may be drawn.[6] Of course, a first principle "does not signify priority [in time], but origin."[7] It is logically (but not necessarily chronologically) prior to its sequent. It is the ultimate starting point from which all conclusions may be drawn in a given area of knowledge or reality. First principles are necessary constituents of all knowledge, but they do not supply any content of knowledge.

Kinds of First Principles

There are as many first principles as there are orders of knowledge and reality. Aquinas does not provide a complete list of first principles in any one place, but rather refers to the different principles by way of example.[8] Since Aquinas is a realist, the realm of knowing is the realm of being. There is no disjunction between the rational and the real. Indeed, one cannot deny he knows reality without implying that he does. So then first principles will have both an epistemological and ontological dimension. Since a first principle is that from which everything else in its order follows, first principles of knowledge are those basic premises from which all else follows in the realm of knowing.

The most important first principles of knowledge are as follows.

The Principle of Identity. In the order of being (ontology) Aquinas states this principle in several ways: "being is being"; "every being is necessarily what it is"; "everything is identical with itself"; and "being and one are convertible."[9] Fundamentally, the principle of identity signifies the unity of things.

When this unity is applied in the order of knowing (epistemology), it takes on the form "being is intelligible." For if it were not so, then "the human intellect is consigned to total absurdity, to the absolute inability to conceive anything whatever: every thought is unthinkable."[10]

The Principle of Non-contradiction. The ontological aspect of this principle may be stated in several ways: "being is not nonbeing"; "it is necessary that being not be nonbeing"; and "it is impossible that being be nonbeing." Epistemologically, there are at least two ways to express this principle: (1) it is impossible that contradictory statements be simultaneously true; (2) if one contradiction is true, the other is necessarily false.[11] Aquinas justifies this principle by pointing out that being is intelligible; nonbeing is unintelligible and whoever denies this uses it to make an intelligible statement.[12]

The Principle of Excluded Middle. This principle is the principle of either/or. Ontologically, something must either be or not be. It cannot both be and not be at the same time and in the same sense.

Epistemologically, a proposition must be either true or false. It cannot be both true and false simultaneously in the same sense. "Whatever the subject, either affirmation or negation is true," although we do not always know which is the case. In this sense "it is merely the logical consequence of the absurdity implied in a simultaneous yes and no about the same thing considered from the same aspect."[13]

The Principle of Causality. Ontologically, the principle of causality is limited in its application to the realm of finite, contingent beings. In this regard, "everything which is capable of existing or not existing has some cause; because considered in itself it is indifferent to either alternative, and thus there has to be something else which determines it to be." Therefore, "since there can be no process into infinity there has to be something necessary, which is the cause of all things capable of existing or not existing."[14] In general, then, causality says "everything contingent is

caused." Or "every efficient action, which is a passage from potency to act, is caused." Since it is contingent, it is possible for it to not be, and therefore it is caused or dependent on another.[15]

Epistemologically, every proposition that is not self-evident depends for its truth on the truth of another. Whatever is not necessarily true is dependent on some other truth. Of course, not every proposition can depend for its truth on the truth of another. Hence, there must be some first, self-evident principles that are simply true in themselves.

The Principle of Finality. "Every agent acts for an end." This principle of finality (or teleology) is the one Aquinas uses to develop many of his great metaphysical and epistemological theses. In its ontological form, finality states that "being as agent is finalized." He wrote, "I answer that it is in the nature of every act to communicate itself as far as possible."[16] To act for an end is to communicate oneself.

Epistemologically, the principle of finality takes the following forms: every proposition has an end in view; it is necessary that every proposition communicate some meaning; and mind communicates what is intelligible.[17]

Priority among First Principles

All of the foregoing principles may be said to be "first" principles. The question is which principle is first among the first. As Aquinas says, "Not every principle is a first principle. . . . Nevertheless, it must be observed that a principle of movement may happen to be first in a genus, but not first absolutely."[18] That is, while all of the first principles are first relatively, only one can be first absolutely. Before a determination is made as to which principle is first among firsts, the qualifications for this high honor must be examined.

As Aristotle defines it, "the most certain principle of all is that about which it is impossible to be mistaken. For such a one must be the best known . . . and non-hypothetical."[19] He first sets down three conditions for the strongest principle. First, no one can lie or err in respect to it. Second, it is unconditional. Third, it is not acquired by demonstration or in another like manner, but it comes naturally.

It is important to note that Aquinas and Aristotle are speaking of the absolutely first principle of *knowing,* not of *being.* In this epistemological

context there are two prime candidates for absolutely first principle: the principle of identity and the principle of non-contradiction.

Some contend that identity is first. Jacques Maritain insists that the principle of identity is first and that the principle of non-contradiction is only a negative form of it.[20] The reason usually offered in defense of the primacy of identity is that the positive must precede the negative. It is argued that first the mind has a concept of being. The first and most basic judgment, then, is that "being is being," which is an assertion of identity.

Others object, contending that such a position confuses the order of judgments and concepts. The mind has a concept of being first; the next concept must be that of nonbeing, since that is all that is left. The first judgment, however, must be of the relation between being and nonbeing, which is one of contradiction and not of identity. "In short, the positive is prior to the negative only in the sense that a concept of the negative presupposes a concept of the positive; not in the sense that a positive judgment must precede a negative one."[21]

Aquinas holds that non-contradiction is first among first principles. Whatever may be said of other philosophers, scholastic or non-scholastic, it seems clear that for Aquinas (and for Aristotle before him) the principle of non-contradiction is absolutely first in the order of knowing. Aristotle writes: "It is clear, then, that such is the most certain principle of all; and what this is, we state as follows. For it is impossible that the same [attribute] should at the same time belong and not belong to the same thing, and under the same respect. . . . This indeed is the most certain of all the principles. Wherefore all who demonstrate argue back to this ultimate proposition; for by nature this is the principle of all the other axioms."[22] Aquinas agrees with this assertion: "And hence the first indemonstrable principle is, that it is not [possible] to affirm and deny at the same time; which is based on the nature of being and non-being; and on this principle all others are based."[23]

Summing up, the primacy of the principle of non-contradiction is manifest since the principles of identity and excluded middle are dependent aspects of it. For if contradictions were possible, then a thing would not have to be identical with itself (identity) nor would opposites have to be different from each other (excluded middle). The principle of causality is also reducible to the principle of non-contradiction, for on inspection of the

terms it would be a contradiction to affirm that a contingent (dependent) being is uncaused (independent). Likewise, the principle of finality rests upon the principle of non-contradiction, since otherwise being could communicate something other than being; intelligence would communicate something other than the intelligible.[24]

Finally, then, if non-contradiction is the only principle that is strictly first, why are these other principles necessary at all? Sullivan explains that "it is because they also may be called first principles, not indeed in the sense that no principle is prior to them, but in the sense that each is first as the source of that particular branch of human knowledge at the head of which it stands."[25]

The Necessity of First Principles: Certainty and Certitude

There could be no certainty in knowledge if there were no certain principles of knowledge on which to build. But there are two sides to this issue: the objective certainty of the principles and the subjective certitude of the knower who knows the principles.

Objective Certainty

First principles are considered certain and infallible by virtue of their very nature. In this regard the adjectives used by Aquinas to describe them are illuminating. He calls them "necessary," "indemonstrable," and "non-discursive."

First principles are necessary and indemonstrable because an infinite regress of knowledge is impossible. "For it is impossible that there be entirely demonstration of all things; for it would proceed into infinity, so that not even in this way would there be demonstration."[26] "For not everything can be demonstrated." For "if everything were demonstrated, since the same thing is not demonstrated by itself but by another, there would have to be a circle in demonstrations. But this cannot be . . . or it would be necessary to proceed into infinity." But, "if there were progress into infinity, there would be no demonstration; because every conclusion of demonstration is rendered certain by its reduction to the first principle of demonstration: which would not be if demonstration proceeded upward to infinity." Therefore, it is evident "that not all things are demonstrable."[27]

Aquinas sheds further light on why an infinite regress in knowledge is impossible. "As in the intellect, when reasoning, the conclusion is compared with the principle, so in the intellect composing and dividing, the

predicate is compared with the subject." So "if our intellect were to see at once the truth of the conclusion in the principle, it would never understand by discursion and reasoning."[28]

Since we in our present state of knowledge must think discursively, it would be impossible for us to know anything if there were an infinite regress of terms in our syllogisms. "The identity of the first object with that represented by the middle term cannot depend on an infinite series of middle terms; for no matter how far back one might go, there would still be a premise left to be proved." Hence, "one must come at last to a premise which is self-evident: i.e., in which the identity or diversity of the two objective concepts is immediately clear to the intellect from a simple inspection of the concepts."[29] "C. S. Lewis saw this clearly when he wrote: “But you cannot go on ‘explaining away’ forever: you will find that you have explained explanation itself away. You cannot go on ‘seeing through’ things forever. . . . It is no use trying to see through first principles. If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To ‘see through’ all things is the same as not to see" (*The Abolition of Man*, 91).

Certainty in knowledge, then, depends ultimately on propositions about whose terms there can be no question; their truth is immediately known by inspection. These are often called "analytic" principles. Aquinas defines first principles as those "whose predicates are of the nature of the subjects prime propositions of themselves; in order that they may be known of themselves to all, the subjects and predicates must be known to all."[30] And again, "the intellect is always right as regards first principles, since it is not deceived about them for the same reason that it is not deceived about what a thing is. For self-known principles are such as are known as soon as the terms are understood, from the fact that the predicate is contained in the definition of the subject."[31]

It should be noted that although the predicate is contained in the notion of the subject, this does not mean that this is immediately obvious. It may become obvious by inspection of the terms of the premise or by a reduction of the predicate to the subject. For example, it is not necessarily obvious that every contingent being needs a cause until, upon closer inspection, it is seen that contingent means dependent and dependent beings must be dependent on something else (i.e., a cause).

In summary, the mind is always right about first principles, for they are known to be true as soon as the terms are understood, from the fact that the predicate is contained in the definition of the subject.[32]

Since first principles are self-evident, there is a sense in which it is absurd to attempt a direct proof or demonstration of them. Since some people deny their validity, however, there is an indirect sense in which some attempt to prove them. This is done by showing that first principles cannot actually be denied without absurdity. Aristotle lists several arguments of this kind in defense of the first principle of non-contradiction:

1. To deny it would deprive words of their fixed meaning and render speech useless.
2. Reality of essences must be abandoned. There would be becoming without anything that becomes, flying without a bird, accidents without substance.
3. There would be no distinction between things. All would be one.
4. It would mean the destruction of truth, for truth and falsity would be the same.
5. It would destroy all thought, even opinion, for its affirmation would be its negation.
6. Desire and preference would be useless, for there would be no difference between good and evil.
7. Everything would be equally true and false at the same time. No opinion would be more wrong than any other, even in degree.
8. It would make impossible all becoming, change, or motion, for all this implies a transition from one state to another, but all states would be the same, if contradiction is not true.[33]

Despite the weighty defense given to this important principle, there are those who persist in denying its rational justifiability. Some insist that to defend the principle of non-contradiction by using the principle of non-contradiction is to argue in a circle. It is to argue against a position that denies contradiction by saying it is contradictory. But this is really to say nothing. It is simply saying that a denial of the principle of non-contradiction is contradictory.

But this objection confuses the issue. For the law of non-contradiction is not used as the *basis* of the indirect proof of its validity; it is simply used in the *process* of defending its validity. Take, for example, the statement "I cannot speak a word in English." This statement is self-destructive, since it does what it says it cannot do. It uses English to deny that it can use English. So it disproves itself. The indirect proof for the law of non-contradiction is similar. We cannot deny the law of non-contradiction without using it in the very sentence that denies it. For the sentence that denies non-contradiction is offered as a non-contradictory sentence. If it is not, then it makes no sense.

In like manner, if I say "I can utter a word in English," it is obvious that I uttered a word in English in the process of doing so. But there is nothing self-defeating about using English to say I can use English. There is only something self-defeating about using English to deny I can use English. Likewise, there is nothing wrong with using the principle of non-contradiction to defend the principle of non-contradiction. There is only something wrong about using the principle of non-contradiction to deny that principle.

The basic laws of thought are self-evidently true. They are known to be such by inspecting their terms to see if the predicate is reducible to the subject. The only direct "proof" of them is to state clearly their meaning, so that their self-evident nature becomes intuitively or immediately obvious.

First principles, then, are not only indemonstrable but are actually undeniable. That is, they are objectively certain, regardless of the subjective certainty we may have (or may not have) about them.

Subjective Certitude

Certainty and certitude are different. Certainty is objective while certitude is subjective. A principle is certain if it is self-evident, whether a person is sure about it or not. Certitude, on the other hand, involves a knower's assent to that which is certain; it is a subjective response to what is objectively so.

According to Aquinas, once the terms of first principles are known the mind must assent. Assent to first principles, however, is not "free." "Now the assent of science is not subject to free choice, because the knower is obliged to assent by the force of the demonstration."[34] Assent is "natural": "If, therefore, that which the reason apprehends is such that it naturally

assents thereto, e.g., first principles, it is not in our power to assent to it or to dissent. For in such cases, assent follows naturally, and consequently, properly speaking is not subject to our command."[35] In fact, Aquinas even speaks of a natural, unconscious inclination of the intellect to truth, a kind of "instinct for truth." For "truth is the intellect's good and the term of its natural ordination; and just as things without knowledge are moved toward their end without knowing it, so sometimes does the human intellect by a natural inclination tend toward truth although it does not perceive its nature."[36]

The reason for this natural predisposition to truth is as follows: "Everything that comes from God receives from Him a certain nature by which it is related to its final end." But "it is also true that every power has a natural appetite . . . with respect to its proper good . . . and with the exception of the will all the powers of the soul are necessitated by the objects."[37]

Certitude about first principles, then, comes from the fact that the intellect is naturally determined to truth and we are not free to dissent. The reason the mind must assent to first principles is that they are reducible to the principle of non-contradiction to which the mind cannot dissent. "The first of all assents is stated as a modal proposition; on the other hand, all other immediate assents imply this first assent, and mediate assents can exist only insofar as they can be reduced to the principle of noncontradiction."[38]

Certainty is always accompanied by assent. That is, the mind always assents to propositions that are certain, provided that it understands them. Not all assent, however, is accompanied by certitude. We may assent to something as being only probable and not necessary, as is the case in our everyday life. "In the business affairs of men, there is no such thing as demonstrative and infallible proof, and we must be content with a certain conjectural probability, such as that which an orator employs to persuade."[39] We may also assent to the conclusion of a probable induction but not with certitude. "For he who proceeds inductively through singulars to a universal, does not demonstrate, nor does he construct a necessarily conclusive syllogism."[40]

There are different kinds of certainty, which can be summarized as follows: "Assent with intellectual certitude is threefold: (a) metaphysical,

wherein there is absolutely no possibility for the truth of the opposite; (b) physical; and (c) moral, wherein there is a remote possibility for the truth of the contrary, but we have no sufficient reason to think this possibility will be fulfilled in the situation at hand."[41] Further, "a man can possess intellectual certitude about a proposition and still fail to possess subjective or emotional certitude. He can emotionally fear the opposite, even though he cannot think the opposite to be a possibility." For example, "a man can be absolutely certain that God exists and still feel His absence. Subjective certitude often works in the opposite direction as well. A feeling of conviction can so invade the rational powers that the will moves the intellect to assent where there is no sufficient evidence or where there is no real evidence at all."[42]

Aquinas even acknowledges that a person may have certitude that something is true when in fact it is not. "Now certitude of adherence does not belong properly to the act of faith; first because it also belongs to the intellectual virtues of science, wisdom and understanding; then because it is common to both true and false faith . . . for men do not adhere any less firmly to truth than to falsity."[43] It should be carefully noted, however, that Aquinas is not speaking here of intellectual certitude about first principles, about which there can be no error, but about matters of faith that are not rationally demonstrable. He is speaking of "certitude of adherence" or the tenacity of belief, not the veracity of it.

Nevertheless, Aquinas does admit that "error seems to be even more natural to men as they actually are than knowledge because men are easily deceived and because the soul is longer in error than in truth during its life."[44] Frederick Wilhelmsen lists the causes of error as follows: "Diseased sensation, incomplete consciousness resulting from a lack of union between intellect and sensation, the drive of the will toward the good, the necessity to act without compelling evidence in the practical order—these are the causes of error."[45] But whatever the causes of error, it is not a question of error with regard to first principles.

Although Aquinas speaks of an unconscious "natural inclination" to the truth, properly speaking the assent to certitude is a conscious activity. We can be certain if we know that the truth is a first principle or reducible to it, which necessitates a rational awareness. Accordingly, Aquinas makes it a prerequisite of assent that the relationship between subject and predicate be perceived as necessary:

Sometimes, again, the possible intellect is so determined that it adheres to one member without reservation. This happens sometimes because of the intelligible object and sometimes because of the will. Furthermore, the intelligible object sometimes acts immediately, sometimes mediately. It acts immediately when the truth of the proposition is unmistakably clear to the intellect from the intelligible objects themselves. This is the state of one who understands principles, which are known as soon as the terms are known. . . . In this case the very nature of the terms immediately determines the intellect to propositions of this sort.[46]

So if we "understand" the principle and when the truth is "unmistakably clear" to the mind assent is necessitated and certitude is guaranteed. "Assent is a conscious discernment and commitment to the truth . . . assent is the mind's ratification of the proposition formed."[47]

But if assent is always conscious, why does Aquinas refer to an "unconscious" inclination of a subject or agent to its divinely appointed object or end?[48] This point will be discussed more fully later, but here it might be observed that there is a difference between a natural "inclination" to truth, which may at times be unconscious, and a conscious "assent" to truth. It is when we consciously reflect on this natural inclination and the necessary nature of the proposition that assent comes "naturally," albeit consciously.

Since certitude involves a conscious assent to the certainty of the truth for which we have an unconscious appetite, then the possession of this truth by the intellect is the reward of certitude. In short, "to reflection, certitude appears as the repose in the possession of this good, a sort of partial beatitude of the intellect caused by the presence of truths, of which nothing in the world could ever deprive it."[49] The reward for the hunger for truth is the meat of certitude that we consciously enjoy when we perceive the certainty and necessity of the truth possessed.

The Ontological Basis of First Principles

It is because first principles are self-evident and analytic that they are undeniable. For Aquinas, however, analytic does not necessarily mean a priori or independent of experience. First principles are known because the mind knows reality. In fact, these epistemological principles have an ontological basis in reality. For "a system of valid philosophy cannot be developed from *a priori* principles alone by pure deduction, as Spinoza

tried to do. Trust must be attained by a combination of principles, sense judgments, and the conclusions derived by reasoning from either or both."[50]

For Aquinas it is sufficient that we know being (or that we know that we know being) and that in reality our knowledge of first principles is based in our most fundamental knowledge of being. He sees no need to justify this knowledge any more than we could directly demonstrate a first principle.

For thought is based in thing. That is, knowing is based in being. This does not mean, however, that there is a direct one-to-one correspondence between the thing-in-itself and the thing-as-known. In two clear passages, Aquinas spells out his view on this subject. "Whence, to the composition and division of the intellect there corresponds something on the part of reality; nevertheless, it is constituted in reality in a manner different from that in which it is in the intellect. For the proper object of the human intellect is the whatness (quiddity) of the material thing which falls under [the perception of] sense and imagination. . . . Nevertheless, the composition by the intellect differs from the composition in reality. For the things which are combined in reality are diverse; whereas the composition of the intellect is a sign of the identity of the things which are combined."[51] "So, since the true is in the intellect in so far as the intellect is conformed to the thing understood, the aspect of the true must needs pass from the intellect to the thing understood, so that also the thing understood is said to be true in so far as it has some relation to the intellect."[52]

According to Aquinas, being is the beginning of knowing. It is a given, undemonstrable fact that ultimately thought is based in thing and that what the rational knows is the real. This is why Aquinas sees no need to elaborate his epistemology before his natural theology. He begins with a knowledge of finite being and on that builds his knowledge of Infinite Being. Furthermore, as Eric Mascall pointedly observes, it is as unnecessary to expound one's epistemology before beginning to talk about God as it is to understand human physiology before beginning to walk.[53]

Aquinas does not ask how we know that we know reality. It is obvious that we do. That is a question philosophers have asked since the time of Kant. Aquinas's followers respond in two basic ways to this question. There is the school of Neo-Thomists, like Cardinal Mercier, Leon Noel, G. Picard, and others at the University of Louvain, known as critical

realists. They claim that although we are certain that there is a world of things beyond our thought, nevertheless we must subject this certainty to criticism and establish the truth that we really know being. They contend that even though the mind begins with things, in philosophy we must begin with the mind's knowledge of things and not the things themselves. Epistemology is a critique and a critique is logically prior to a metaphysics.[54]

Other Thomists feel that post-Kantian philosophy has made a gratuitous assumption in denying what is most obvious to the realist, namely, that it is something that we know and not nothing. Wilhelmsen, for example, says: "A Thomistic realist has no need to follow the fortunes of critical realism as it attempts to 'bridge the gap' between the mind and things. The Thomist refuses to admit any gap between mind and things. Therefore, he refuses to build a bridge where there is no need for one. He refuses to separate sense knowledge from intellectual knowledge because he finds them together, not separate."[55]

It is argued that to justify our knowledge of reality by anything other than reality itself is to base knowledge on non-reality. "But if the truth about being is not strong enough to act as the foundation of philosophy, if it is not evident, if it needs a prior truth to guarantee it, then the absolutely first principle of philosophy will not be the truth about being; it will be some other truth."[56] Wilhelmsen continues: "It follows, therefore, that a 'critical realism' is a contradiction in terms. Either the truth that 'being exists' is first among all evident truths, or it is not. If it is not, then realism is not realism. . . . The 'critical' swallows up the 'realist' in a philosophical comedy in which metaphysicians attempt to justify that what they say lies beyond all need of justification."[57]

As a realist, Aquinas himself would respond to the question of how we know first principles are based in reality by noting that it is undeniable. For one cannot know about reality that he cannot know anything about reality, unless he does know something about reality. For Aquinas first principles of all kinds, whether logical or ontological, are not directly demonstrable, but they are indirectly undeniable. If they were capable of being proved, they would not be first principles. The only possible way to defend them is indirectly, by showing that it is self-defeating to deny them, or better, by indicating that every denial that we can know reality itself presupposes and affirms a knowledge of reality. "Just as the first principles

are indemonstrable insofar as they are first, so also any direct demonstration of the ontological validity of first principles is impossible."[58]

Garrigou-Lagrange argues that "this ontological validity cannot be demonstrated by a direct method, for, like the necessity of first principles, it is an immediately evident truth. The immediately connected subject and predicate do not admit of a demonstrative middle term." Hence, "all that we can do is to explain the meaning of the subject and the predicate . . . for an attempt at demonstration would result merely in a vicious circle, since one would have to assume as true what remains to be proved, to wit, the ontological validity of first principles."[59] First principles may not be directly demonstrable, but they are actually undeniable. And it is a first principle that being is that which is, and that which is can be known.

The Epistemological Origin of First Principles

In some ways this discussion is logically prior to the preceding, since we cannot discuss what we do not in some way possess. It is also true to the order of Aquinas, however, to discuss what we know before we know exactly how we know it. In a very clear and complete passage, Aquinas explains the whole psychological process of the origin of our knowledge of first principles:

> So inquiry in all the speculative sciences works back to something first given, which one does not have to learn or discover (otherwise we would have to go on to infinity), but which he knows naturally. Such are the indemonstrable principles of demonstration (for example, every whole is greater than its part, and the like), to which all demonstrations in the sciences are reducible. Such too are the first conceptions of the intellect (for example, being, one, and the like), to which all definitions in the sciences must be reduced. From this it is clear that the only things we can know in the speculative sciences, either through demonstration or definition, are those that lie within the range of these naturally known principles. Now these principles are revealed to man by the light of the agent intellect, which is something natural to him. . . . So our knowledge of the above-mentioned principles begins in the senses and memory, as is evident from the philosopher [Aristotle, *Posterior analytics,* II, 19, 100a 3-9]. Consequently, these principles do not carry us

beyond that which we can know from the objects grasped by the senses.[60]

All Knowledge Begins in Sensation

All knowledge begins in sensation, but the mind's ability to know is logically prior to sensation. That is, everything that is in the mind was first in the senses, except the mind itself. "But the human intellect . . . is in potentiality with regard to things intelligible, and is at first like a clean tablet on which nothing is written, as the philosopher[61] says."[62] Again, "although the intellect is superior to the senses, nevertheless in a manner it receives from the senses, and its first and principal objects are founded in sensible things."[63] Nevertheless, the mind has an innate, a priori capacity to know, otherwise it would be impossible for it to know even first principles. This ability rests in what Aquinas calls agent (active) intellect.

The Need for the Agent Intellect

In order to arise from sensation, which provides as such only a knowledge of singulars, to a knowledge of universal principles, it is necessary to have the action of something that is superior to sensation as the universal is superior to the individual. Such is the agent intellect. "Truth is not entirely from the senses. For the light of the agent intellect is needed, through which we know the truth of changeable things unchangeably, and discern things themselves from their likeness."[64] Aquinas further describes the role of the agent intellect as follows: "The possible intellect cannot have actual knowledge of principles except through the active intellect. For the knowledge of principles is received from sensible things. . . . But intelligibles cannot be received from sensible things except through the abstraction of the active intellect."[65]

In summary, then, the whole process of knowing first principles is this: "For the first principles become known by the natural light of the active intellect itself; they are not acquired through reasoning, but only through this . . . that their terms become known. Which comes about by this [process]: memory is taken from sensible things, and experience is taken from memory, and knowledge of those terms is derived from experience; and when these [terms] are known, common propositions of this kind become known which are the principles of the arts and sciences."[66]

First Principles Arise from Judgments, Not Apprehensions

It should not be thought that the mind apprehends (first act of the intellect) first principles by abstracting their nature from sensible things. Properly speaking, first principles, as well as other knowledge, are to be found in judgments (second act of the intellect). "The human intellect must of necessity understand by composition and division [judgment]." It "does not acquire perfect knowledge of a thing by the first apprehension; but it first apprehends something of the thing, such as the quiddity, which is the first and proper object of the intellect; and then it understands the properties, accidents, and various dispositions affecting the essence. Thus it necessarily relates one thing with another by composition or division; and from one composition and division it necessarily proceeds to another, and this is reasoning."[67]

"For the perfection of the intellect is truth as known. Therefore, properly speaking, truth resides in the intellect composing and dividing; and not in the sense, nor in the intellect knowing what a thing is. But the intellect can know its own conformity with the intelligible thing; yet it does not apprehend it by knowing of a thing what a thing is. When, however, it judges that a thing corresponds to the form which it apprehends about that thing, then it first knows and expresses truth. This it does by composing and dividing."[68]

The intellectual knowledge of first principles rests in judgment made about the objects of sensible knowledge. First, by way of sensation and abstraction the intellect apprehends that things are and something of what they are. Then, by way of judgment the mind knows that being is and non-being is not. From these judgments arises the first principle of knowledge that "being is not nonbeing," which is the principle of non-contradiction.

An Epistemological Problem

Out of a study of first principles, their certainty, and our certitude of them, there are posed several problems for a Thomistic theory of knowledge. Three of them will be briefly considered here.

How Can First Principles Be Known from Sensation?

"It may be objected that according to Aristotle [*Posterior analytics, I, c.* 13], the universal judgment from which all deductions proceed can be known only by an induction. And even St. Thomas might be thought to support this view [*Posterior analytics,* I, lect. 29]."[69] This is the problem

that was later accentuated by Hume and the empiricists: if all knowledge begins in sensation, if the mind is a tabula rasa at birth, if we have no innate ideas, then how can our knowledge ever rise above the flux of empirical experience? Only flux can come from flux!

The answer, of course, is the agent intellect, which enables us to get more out of the data of sense than sense data. "In every man there is a certain principle of knowledge, namely the light of the agent intellect, through which certain universal principles of all the sciences are naturally understood as soon as proposed to the intellect."[70] Although all knowledge begins in sensation, it is not limited to sensible knowledge.[71] What the mind knows by sensation is not merely its sensations but the essence of things in and through the sensations by the activity of the agent intellect. In fact, "there is nothing in the intellect that has not first been in sense, except intellect itself."[72]

In What Sense are First Principles "Natural" Knowledge?

Aquinas refers to the knowledge of first principles as "natural" and "not by acquisition."[73] Yet if these general principles must be known first in order to know anything at all, and if ultimately they find their origin, like all knowledge, in the senses, are we not arguing in a vicious circle? Are we not driven to accept either the Platonic theory of innate knowledge or Locke's argument that the principles are not known first at all and do not serve as the foundation of any other knowledge? As a matter of fact, Aquinas even uses the word "innate" of first principles. "The first principles of which we have innate cognition are certain likenesses of uncreated truth. When we judge about other things through these likenesses, we are said to judge about things through unchangeable principles or through uncreated truth."[74]

Elsewhere, first principles are said to be acquired by a "natural habit,"[75] a "natural inclination,"[76] as "divinely instilled in us by God."[77] We are said to have natural knowledge of first principles[78] or an understanding of first principles that "follows human nature itself "[79] Aquinas speaks of the mind being "naturally endowed" with principles "not known by investigation" but which are "bestowed on us by nature."[80]

All of this stress on "natural" and "innate" would seem to be quite contrary to the clear assertion that all knowledge begins in the senses. How can it be both a posteriori and yet innate? Gilson answers this problem by noting that "these pre-formed germs of which we have natural knowledge

are the first principles. . . . To say that they preexist, does not mean that the intellect possesses them actually, independently of the action which bodies exercise on our soul; it simply means that they are the first intelligibles which our intellect can reach in starting from sensible experience. The intellection of these principles is no more innate than the conclusions of deductive arguments, but whereas we discover the former naturally, we have to reach the latter by an effort of search."[81]

Other commentators are not so sure that this is all that Aquinas means by these statements on our natural inclination to truth. Sullivan suggests that "innate" and "natural" knowledge may also mean that first principles are regulative principles in all intellectual processes, and that they are in the mind when it begins to act.[82] They do not precede consciousness but they are there in our nature when we begin to act and have God as their Exemplar Cause.

What Is the Precondition for Knowing First Principles?

The answer to the first two epistemological problems has given rise to a third, namely, if it is necessary to posit the agent intellect and a natural inclination to truth to account for the certitude about first principles, then how can we account for the agent intellect's ability to recognize first principles or for our natural appetite for truth? Is this saying that the intellect unconsciously uses first principles (from the moment it begins to act) to come to a conscious knowledge of first principles? That is, are first principles the very categories of thought (to borrow a Kantian term) that are impressed upon our nature by God and with which we are able to think about things? There is a sense in which Aquinas gives an affirmative answer to this question. For first principles are the very structure of the rational by which the real is known and hence the intellect by virtue of its very nature is predisposed to truth.

Sullivan seems to make this point: "The person who makes the sense judgment is not explicitly aware of these principles at the time, but they may be easily and instantly elicited from him by questioning. Hence he may be said to possess principles virtually or habitually, from the beginning of his cognitive life. This is what is meant by saying that first principles 'come by nature, and are known naturally.”[83]

If we take seriously what Aquinas says about "natural inclination" he would seem to be holding a form of realism, somewhere between an

intuitionism and a pure empiricism. He says, for example, "to say that a natural inclination is not well regulated, is to derogate from the author of nature. . . . In the same way, the truth of natural knowledge is of one kind, and the truth of infused or acquired knowledge is of another."[84]

Natural knowledge is neither "infused" a priori nor "acquired" a posteriori. It is known naturally because we have the natural capacity or "form" for it. Aquinas defines natural inclination this way: "Each power of the soul is a form of nature, and has a natural inclination to something. Hence, each power desires, by natural appetite, that object which is suitable to itself."[85]

Furthermore, this inclination is not voluntary but is impressed upon its very nature by God. "Every inclination of anything, whether natural or voluntary, is nothing but an impulse received from the archer. Hence, every agent, whether natural or voluntary, attains to its divinely appointed end, as though of its own accord."[86] It is described as a "natural appetite," which again shows that it is part of our very nature to tend to the truth of first principles. "Natural appetite is that inclination which each thing has, of its own nature, for something; wherefore by its natural appetite each power desires what is suitable to itself."[87]

Aquinas makes a significant contribution to epistemology. By a unique synthesis, he unites both the a priori and a posteriori elements of knowledge. Humans have an innate, natural capacity or form for the truth of first principles that is ingrained into their very nature by God. They have first principles in a kind of virtual and natural way as a precondition of all cognitive activity. And when this innate capacity is filled with the content of sense experience, we are able by conscious reflection to come to a knowledge of the very first principles, which as a fundamental part of our nature, enable us to have a consciousness of them.[88] That is to say, we can only know first principles if we are exercising first principles to know them, otherwise, we would have no means by which they could be known. We have them by way of operation before we know them by way of consciousness.

FOR AQUINAS, WHAT WE KNOW TRULY IS REALITY. The study of reality is called metaphysics ("beyond physics"). How reality is viewed is part of one's worldview. Christianity is committed to a specific worldview called theism. Theism has made a commitment to one of the most basic questions asked by metaphysics: Is reality one or many? Aquinas answers that it is many since there is more than one reality. There is the Creator and also all of his creatures. So for the Christian reality is many (pluralism), not one (monism).

Yet, God is really different from his creation. This is fundamental to a Christian view of reality. The way in which Aquinas develops his position is a major contribution to the long-standing debate between monism and pluralism. The essence of his view is found in his early but crucial little book *On Being and Essence.* It was dedicated to his friar associates, theological students, who desired to understand the essence of Aquinas's position.[1]

The Challenge of Monism

Monism, in contrast to Christian theism, holds that all reality is one. Parmenides of Elea (fl. ca. 485 B.C.) originally posed the problem with which subsequent thinkers have had to grapple and to which Aquinas gave his unique response. Parmenides' argument laid the groundwork for later responses. Each of the main alternatives can be viewed as a response to his dilemma.

The Historical Context

Parmenides contends that there are two ways of inquiry that are directly contrary:

> Come now, and I will tell thee—the only ways of enquiry that can be thought of: the one way, that it is and cannot not-be, is the path of persuasion, for it attends upon Truth; the other, that it is-not and needs must not-be, that I tell thee is a path together unthinkable. For thou couldst not know that which is-not (that is impossible) nor utter it.[2]

Either a thing is or it is not—there is no middle ground. "For never shall this be proved, that things that are not are."[3] "Thus it must either completely be or be not."[4] "Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike; nor is there more here and less there . . . but it is all full of what is. So it is all continuous."[5] In other words, being is one homogenous, indivisible whole.

The Philosophical Argument

The essence of Parmenides' argument is that there cannot be more than one thing (absolute monism). For if there were two things, then they would have to differ. But for things to differ, they must differ either by being or by nonbeing. But since being is that which makes them identical, they cannot differ by it. Nor, on the other hand, can they differ by nonbeing, for non-being is nothing, and to differ by nothing is not to differ at all. Hence, for Parmenides there cannot be a plurality of beings but only one single indivisible being—a rigid monism.

The Pluralistic Alternatives to Monism

The alternatives to monism are few and painful for pluralists (like Christian theists). Basically, there are four alternatives to monism.[6] Each is an attempt to show how there can be many beings. The need for Christians to render an intelligible account of what they believe is critical at this point. For if it is incredible to believe that God is different from his creatures, then the whole Christian system of belief crumbles. Since it is the Christian's duty to render the credible intelligible (see Chap. 5), an answer to monism must be sought. Aquinas provides just such an answer, which grows naturally out of the logical possibilities and historical context of his times. Others before Aquinas had proposed solutions to the problem, but none really succeeded.

The first two forms of pluralism, which we will call atomism and Platonism, affirm that the many beings differ by the principle of nonbeing. The last two views—Aristotelianism and Thomism—hold that the many beings differ in their essence. Only the latter is a satisfactory solution for a Christian theist.

Atomism: Things Differ by Absolute Nonbeing

The ancient atomists, such as Leucippus and Democritus, contended that the principle that separates one being (atom) from another is absolutely nothing (i.e., nonbeing). They called this principle the Void. For them,

being is full and nonbeing is an empty void. The atoms, which do not differ at all in their essence, are separated by the different space they occupy in the Void (empty space).[7] This difference, however, is merely extrinsic. There is no intrinsic difference in the atoms (beings).

Leucippus regarded the whole as one, motionless, uncreated and limited. . . . He posited innumerable elements in perpetual motion—namely the atoms—and held that the number of their shapes was infinite. . . . The nature of the atoms he supposed to be compact and full; that, he said, was being, and it moved the void, which he called not-being and held to exist no less than being. In the same way his associate Democritus of Abdera posited as principles the full and the void.[8]

In short, the atomists' response to Parmenides was that there are many beings (atoms) that differ by nonbeing. Each being occupies a different space in the Void that, in itself, is absolutely Nothing. Of course, this is scarcely an adequate answer to Parmenides, since he would simply point out that to differ by absolutely nothing is to have absolutely no difference at all. And to have absolutely no difference is to be absolutely the same! Monism wins the day over atomism.

Platonism: Things Differ by Relative Nonbeing

Plato, with the help of Parmenides,[9] saw the fallacy of the atomistic position (to which his own earlier view of indivisible Forms [ideas] behind all things was akin),[10] Plato believed that all things in this world have an ideal archetype behind them. This Idea (or Form) is the real world. All things in this world of our experience are only "shadows" of the real world by virtue of their participation in this true Form. For example, each individual human being in this world participates in a universal form of humanness in the world of Ideas. Plato later adopted the view that the Forms (or Ideas) are not indivisibly and unrelatably separated by absolute nonbeing, but are related by the principle of relative nonbeing. "We shall find it necessary in self-defense to put to the question that pronouncement of father Parmenides, and establish by main force that what is not, in some respect has being, and conversely that is, in a way is not."[11]

Thus, by the principle of relative nonbeing (also called the "other"[12]), Plato believed he could have many different Forms (beings) and thus avoid monism. Each Form differed from other Forms in that it was not that other Form. All determination was by negation.

For example, the sculptor determines what the statue is in relation to the stone by chipping away what is not wanted. Likewise, each Form is differentiated from every other Form by negation. What it is, is determined by what it is not. For example, a chair is distinguished from everything else in the room in that it is not the table, floor, or wall. This does not mean that the chair is absolutely nothing. It is something in itself, but it is nothing in relation to other things. That is, it is not those other things.

Parmenides would not have been impressed by Plato's attempt to evade the horns of his dilemma. For he would simply have asked whether there was any difference in the beings themselves. If not, then he would have noted that all these beings (Forms) must be identical. In short, there are not many beings but only one.

Aristotelianism: Things Differ as Simple Beings

Both the atomist and Platonist took one horn of the Parmenidean dilemma, differentiating things by nonbeing. Aristotle and Aquinas took the other horn of the dilemma, attempting to find a difference in the beings themselves. Both contend that there are many beings that are essentially different. Aristotle maintains that these beings are metaphysically simple, while Aquinas views them as metaphysically composite.[13]

Aristotle argued that there was a plurality (forty-seven or fifty-five[14]) of beings or unmoved movers, which are separated from one another in their very being. These beings (movers) cause all the motion in the world, each operating in its own separate cosmic domain. Each is a pure Form with no matter (which is used to differentiate things in this world). This plurality of totally separated substantial Forms has no commonness or community of being whatsoever. They cannot be related to one another,[15] and are completely distinct. In Aristotle's own words,

> But since that which is moved must be moved by something, and the first mover must be in itself unmovable, and eternal movement must be produced by something eternal and a single movement by a single thing, and since we see that besides the simple spatial movement of the universe, which we say the first and unmovable substance produces, there are other spatial movements—those of the planets—which are eternal . . . each of these movements also must be caused by a substance both unmovable in itself and eternal. For the nature of the stars is

> eternal just because it is a certain kind of substance, and the mover is eternal just because it is a certain kind of substance, and the mover is eternal and prior to the moved, and that which is prior to a substance must be a substance. Evidently, then, there must be substances which are the same number as the movements of the stars, and in their nature eternal, and in themselves unmovable, and without magnitude, for the reason before mentioned.[16]

Of course, Parmenides would ask Aristotle just how simple beings can differ in their very being. Things composed of form and matter can differ in that this particular matter is different from that matter, even though they have the same form. But how do pure Forms (Beings) differ from each other? They have no principle of differentiation. But if there is no difference in their being, then their being is identical. Aristotle's solution does not avoid monism either.

Thomism: Things Differ as Complex Being

The fourth pluralistic alternative to Parmenidean monism is represented by Aquinas, who, in common with Aristotle, seeks the difference within the beings themselves. But unlike Aristotle, who posits simple beings, Aquinas believes that all finite beings are composed in their very beings. Only God is an absolutely Simple Being, and there can be only one such Being (God). There can be other kinds of being, namely, composed beings. Beings can differ in their very being because there can be different kinds of beings.[17]

God, for example, is an infinite kind of being. All creatures are finite kinds of beings. God is Pure Actuality (Act); all creatures are composed of actuality (act) and potentiality (potency). Hence, finite things differ from God in that they have a limiting potentiality; God does not. Finite things can differ from each other in terms of whether their potentiality is completely actualized (as in angels) or whether it is being progressively actualized (as in humankind). The essence (whatness) and existence (isness) of all creatures are distinct. The essence and existence of God, on the other hand, are identical. Of course, Aquinas was not the first to make the real distinction in finite beings, but "no one prior to Thomas made such constant reference to this truth or employed it in so many ways as the source of other truths."[18]

GOD

Aquinas argues that "existence is something other than essence or quiddity, unless perhaps there be something the quiddity of which is its very existence."[19] This is so because "every essence or quiddity can be conceived aside from the condition that something be known concerning its existence" but "no essence can be conceived without those things which are parts of essence."[20]

Of course, God must be one and unique because it is impossible that a multiplication of anything should be affected except by virtue of the addition of some difference. . . . But if some thing is posited which is existence alone such that the existence itself is subsisting, this existence does not receive an addition of difference, since then it would not be existence only but existence and beyond that some form.[21]

From this "it follows necessarily that in anything whatever except this (unique pure existence) its existence must be one thing and its quiddity or nature or form another."[22]

It is on this basis that Aquinas builds a proof for the existence of God. Namely, all that belongs to anything is either caused from principles of its nature . . . or accrues to it through some extrinsic principle. . . . But it cannot be that existence itself should be caused by the form or quiddity of the thing, caused, I say, as by means of an efficient cause, because thus something would bring its very self into existence, which is impossible. Therefore it follows that everything such that its existence is other than its nature has existence from another.[23]

ANGELS

Only God is Pure Actuality; in him there is no (passive) potency at all. Thus, he is simply one with no multiplicity at all. On the other hand, "since potency and act are posited in intelligences [angels] it will not be difficult to find a multitude of intelligences, which would be impossible if there were no potency in them."[24] Hence, the only way one angel differs from another "is according to their grade (measure) of potency and act, so that a superior intelligence which is more proximate to the first (being) has more of act and less of potency, and so for others."[25] The human soul as the lowest intelligence has the most potency of any intelligence and for this reason is compared "to a tablet upon which nothing is written."[26]

Aquinas's angels are like Aristotle's pure Forms. They have no matter in them, yet they differ from one another. But unlike Aristotle, Aquinas maintains that these angelic Forms are composed of essence and existence. Their essence (form) is simple, but this form is composed of actuality and potentiality. They are not Pure Actuality (like God). Angels have the potentiality not to be, whereas God cannot not be. Therefore, unlike Aristotle's Forms (unmoved movers), Aquinas's angels can differ in their being. Each has its own act of being, because each has its own potentiality. Pure Actuality cannot differ from Pure Actuality, but anything composed of actuality and potentiality can differ both from Pure Actuality and from other actualities with different potentialities.

HUMAN BEINGS

For Aquinas, "some substances are . . . simple and others are composite, and in both there is an essence."[27] But the essences of "simple substances have a more exalted existence [*esse*]."[28] In an individual human essence there is a composition of form (soul) and matter (body).

Moreover it cannot be said that either of these alone is called essence. For it is evident that matter alone is not the essence of the thing, because it is by means of its essence that the thing is both known [knowable] and ordered in its species and genus. . . . From what has been said it is clear that essence is what is signified by the definition of the thing.[29]

That is, "in composite substances the name of essence signifies that which is composed of matter and form."[30] "Whence it follows that the essence by virtue of which a thing is called being is not form alone, nor matter alone, but both."[31] It is what the Greeks called *ousia.*

Now in things composed of form and matter "the principle of individuation is matter." Not matter in general, "but only signated [de-signated] matter," that is, this matter as opposed to that matter. Hence, it is "thisness" that distinguishes one material thing from another. For example, humankind as such has flesh and bones but John is *this* flesh and *these* bones. Humankind as such has flesh and bones absolutely, whereas an individual human being does not. "Accordingly, it is clear that the essence of Socrates and the essence of man do not differ except according to signate and nonsignate."[32]

It follows from this that humankind considered in the generic sense is neither one nor many. For if plurality were essential to the nature of humanity, there could never be one human. "Similarly, if unity were to belong to its *ratio* [notion], then would it be one and the same of Socrates and of Plato, nor could it be multiple as many."[33] From this it follows that "it is false to say that the essence of man, inasmuch as he is man, has existence in this singular, because if existence in this singular applied to man as man, then (man) would never exist outside this singular."[34]

So God has no finite Form; angels are simple finite forms; and humans are a composite of form and matter. But the form of both angels and humans is composed of essence and existence. God, on the other hand, has no composition. His essence is his existence, that is, it is of his essence to exist. Hence, God cannot be multiple, but creatures can. God and creatures, then, can differ in their very beings, since they are different kinds of beings. One creature can differ from another in that they have differing potentialities. In this unique way Aquinas provides an answer to the age-old dilemma posed by monism. Things do differ in their being because there are different kinds of beings. Parmenides was wrong because he assumed that "being" is always understood univocally. Aquinas, on the other hand, sees that being is analogous, being understood in similar but different ways. All beings are the same in that they are all actual. Finite beings differ from an infinite Being in that they have differing potentialities that have been actualized.

To summarize: There is a threefold way of having an essence in substances. One way is like God, whose essence is His very existence. . . . According to the second mode essence is found in created intellectual substances in which essence is other than their existence, although their essence is without matter. . . . And therefore in such substances there is not found a multitude of individuals in one species. . . . In the third mode essence is found in substances composed of matter and form. .. . And therefore . . . in them a multiplication of individuals in one species is possible, because of the division of signated matter.[35]

The Superiority of Aquinas's Position

The value of Aquinas's view is manifest by both its own rationality and the implausibility of its alternatives. Parmenides' position, by contrast,

does violence to our experience of a differentiated yet interrelated multiplicity of beings. But if a rigid monism is unacceptable, there seem to be only four basic pluralistic alternatives.

Atomism attempts to explain multiplicity by affirming that absolute nonbeing—the Void—is that which separates one being from another. But surely this answer is insufficient. For as Parmenides painfully points out, to differ by that which is absolutely nonexistent is not to differ at all. And if there is no real distinction, then there is no distinction in reality at all. All is one.

Platonism uses relative nonbeing as the principle of differentiation. That is, while admitting that things differ by nonbeing, Platonism holds that non-being in some way exists, even though it is "other" than being. That is, differentiation is by negation. One being is distinct from another not by what it is but by what it is not—different not by being but by nonbeing. In other words, the differentiating factor is not within being but is outside of being—it is neither real nor actual. But nothing that is external to being can be the principle of differentiation *within* being. But if there is no actual difference within the nature of things, then there is actually no difference between them at all—the old Parmenidean dilemma in a different form.

The Aristotelian multiplicity of simple, separated substances has no principle of individuation at all. Aristotle calls on neither absolute nor relative nonbeing to explain how there can be many simple, separate beings. Not only is this view without a principle of differentiation, but, as Plotinus noted, it is without any principle of unification. That is, there is nothing to coordinate the separate operations of the many prime movers.

Thomism argues that multiplicity is possible because there are different kinds of being. This is possible because there is a real distinction between existence and essence. That is to say, being is not a homogenous, undifferentiated whole. Rather, created being is a dynamic composition of essence and existence, that is, of the correlative principles of potency and act. The question is not "to be" or "not to be" but "what kind of being?" Hence, things differ from one another by the kind of being or actuality they are. Being is not predicated of things univocally, for then all would be one. Nor is it predicated of things equivocally, for then all would be totally different and isolated. Rather, being is predicated of things analogically—each essence has being in its own distinct way. Each thing has its one mode

of be-ing. In other words, "essence," the principle of differentiation, is real. It is "part" of the very being of things, a co-constitutive principle. This is not to say that essence is real prior to its connection to existence or independent of it.[36] The reality of essence is in its correlativity with existence. Thus an existing essence is real.

In brief, the real distinction within being *(ens)* between essence (*essentia*) and existence (*esse*) seems to be the only satisfactory answer to the Parmenidean problem of unity and plurality. Without an analogy of being there is no way to account for multiplicity. In univocity of being things are either unrelated or identical. Further, if being is taken univocally then there can only be one being; all being is then identical (entire sameness leaves no room for any difference in being). Furthermore, if being is taken equivocally, then there can be no more than one being. For if this is being and everything else is totally different from it, then everything else is nonbeing. For what is totally different from being would be nonbeing. The only way to avoid the monistic conclusion that follows from either an equivocal or a univocal view of beings is to take an analogical view. And the only way being can be analogical is if there is within being both the principle of unification and the principle of differentiation. Aquinas calls these, respectively, *esse* and *essentia*, which are related as actuality is to potentiality. Since finite beings have different potentialities (essences), these finite beings can be differentiated in reality when these potentialities are actualized or brought into existence in different kinds of being.

What is being? Being is that which is. Being can be either simple (Pure Actuality) or complex (actuality and potentiality). There cannot be two absolutely simple beings. A simple being (having no potentiality) can —indeed, must—differ from complex beings. Therefore, there can be only one Being pure and simple, but there are many beings with a mixture of act and potency. Only one *is* Being; everything else *has* being. In this way Aquinas provides the only adequate answer to monism.

Should old Aquinas be forgotten? If so, then old Parmenides must be remembered, since no one else adequately challenges his argument for monism, and, thus, there would be no rational way to believe in Christian theism. If old Aquinas's answer to monism should never be brought to mind, then old Parmenides' argument for monism will be. In the realm of

metaphysics, it looks very much like it is either Aquinas or Parmenides. Of the two, the view of Aquinas alone takes account of our senses and intellect.

AQUINAS'S VIEW OF GOD is an integral part of his view of reality (metaphysics). His exposition is deeply rooted in God's self-revelation. He continually cites the Bible in support of his position. This is true not only in his numerous commentaries on Scripture (see Chap. 4), but also in his theological writings.[1] For example, in discussing God's immutability he quotes Malachi 3:6: "I the Lord change not." In defending God's self-existence (aseity), he cites Exodus 3:14, where God says to Moses, "I AM that I AM."

Aquinas's view of God falls within the classical theistic tradition of Augustine and Anselm. Aquinas is the greatest classical theist ever to write extensively on the topic. What distinguishes classical theists from non-classical theists is their belief that God is an absolutely simple, infinite, eternal, and immutable Being. Many contemporary theists deny one or more of these attributes of God. This deviation is the result of the process theology of Alfred North Whitehead and his followers, including Charles Hartshorne, John Cobb, David Griffin, Schubert Ogden, and Lewis Ford. Their view that God is finite, temporal, and changeable is also known as neoclassical theism, panentheism (All-in-God), and bipolar theism. Modifications of this view are held even by many Roman Catholic and evangelical theologians which is often called Open Theism. Clark Pinnock (*The Most Moved Mover*), Gregory Boyd, John Sanders, and Richard Swinburne are proponents of the view. While the do not call all the way into Process Theology (Panentheism), nonetheless, they generally deny crucial attributes of the God of classical theism, including immutability, eternality, simplicity, impassibility, and infallible foreknowledge of future free acts.

The Nature of God

Aquinas defends all the traditional attributes of God, including immutability, eternality, simplicity, unity, and infinity. In fact, he anticipates many "modern" objections and responds to them with amazing profundity.

Pure Actuality

God is Pure Act (Actuality) as such, He unmeasured by any potentiality. Everything with potency is created. For no potency can

actualize itself. Hence, there must be a Pure Actuality which actualizes every other potentiality that exists. Angels are acts as received in pure forms that wholly receive their actuality from creation. Humankind is act as received in form/matter (soul/body) that progressively receives actuality. In brief, God actually endures, but he endures as Pure Actuality. Since he has no potentiality, he cannot endure progressively. He endures in a much higher way—as Pure Actuality. Put another way, every creature *has* being. But only God *is* Being, pure and simple. He is a necessary Being and such must necessary exist. He is a Being that cannot *not* be. Only a contingent being (a creature) has the possibility (potentiality) not to be (exist). So, if God is a Necessary Being, then He has no potency. He is Pure Actuality.

Simplicity

Aquinas considered simplicity to be an important attribute of God. He often refers to it when discussing other attributes. Simplicity means that God has no parts. He is indivisible. His simplicity follows from his Pure Actuality since everything with parts has potentiality—the potentiality to be divided. Hence, what has no potentiality (viz., Pure Actuality) cannot have parts. It must be absolutely simple. Further, God is infinite, and it is not possible to have an infinite number of parts since no matter how many you have, one more could always be added. Finally, whatever is composed of parts making up a whole must have had a composer. But God is the First Uncaused Cause. Hence, he cannot have parts. So, God is absolutely simple and indivisible in His Being.

God's Immutability

In his epic *Summa theologiae* Aquinas asks whether God is altogether immutable.[2] He offers three basic arguments in favor of God's unchangeability. The first is based on the fact that a God of Pure Actuality ("I Amness") has no potentiality. For everything that changes has potentiality. But there can be no potentiality in God (he is Pure Actuality). It follows, therefore, that God cannot change.

The second argument for God's immutability follows from his simplicity. If everything about a being changed, then it would not be the same being but an entirely new being. In fact, such a phenomenon would not be change but annihilation of one thing and creation of something entirely new. Now if in every change in a being something remains the same and something does not, then it must be composed of these two

elements (i.e., what changes and what does not change). But an absolutely simple being, such as God, has no composition. Therefore, it follows that God cannot change.

The third argument for God's unchangeability begins with his absolute perfection. God is, by his very nature, an absolutely perfect being. If there were any perfection that he lacked, then he would not be God. To change one must gain something new. But to gain a new perfection is to have lacked it. Hence, God cannot change. If he did, he would not be God. Rather, he would have been a being lacking in some perfection, not the absolutely perfect God he is.

Aquinas also argues that God alone is immutable.[3] All creatures exist only because of the will of the Creator. It was his power that brought them into existence, and it is his power that keeps them in existence. Therefore, if he withdrew his power they would cease to exist. But whatever can cease to exist is not immutable. For ceasing to exist is a change, and immutable beings cannot change. Therefore, God alone is immutable; everything else could cease to exist.

God's Eternality

God is not tempora1,[4] but beyond time. Aquinas offers several arguments in support of this conclusion. First, whatever exists in time can be measured in terms of its befores and afters. A changeless being, however, has no befores and afters; it is always the same. Consequently, God must be timeless.

The second argument for God's eternality follows from his immutability, and stresses another aspect of time. Whatever is temporal has successive states, one after the other. But as an immutable being God has no changing states, one after another. Immutability necessarily implies eternity.[5] Therefore, God cannot be temporal (in time).

Not only is God eternal but he alone is eternal.[6] The reason for this is that God alone is essentially immutable, since all creatures can cease to exist. But, as we have seen, eternity necessarily follows from immutability. It follows, then, that God alone is essentially eternal.

Aquinas distinguishes eternity from endless time in several ways.[7] First, whatever is essentially whole is essentially different from that which has parts. Eternity differs from time in this way (eternity is a now; time has

now and then). Hence, eternity is essentially different from time. In other words, God's eternity is not divided; it is all present to him in his eternal now. So it must be essentially different from time that comes only moment by moment.

Second, endless time is not eternity; it is just more of time. Eternity, on the other hand, differs in kind from time (i.e., essentially, not merely accidentally). Endless time differs only accidentally from time because it is simply an elongation of time. Thus, eternity is essentially different from endless time.

Third, endless time can be computed in terms of befores and afters. Hence, endless time is not the same as eternity. The eternal is changeless, but what can be measured in terms of befores and afters has changed. It follows, then, that the eternal cannot be endless time. It must be something qualitatively rather than quantitatively different.

Fourth, Aquinas argues that there is a crucial difference between the "now" of time and the "now" of eternity.[8] The "now" of time is movable while the "now" of eternity is not. Eternity is not movable in any way. The eternal "now" is unchanging, but the now of time is ever-changing. Therefore, they cannot be the same. There is only an analogy between time and eternity, not an identity. God's now has no past or future; time's now does.

Some have mistakenly concluded that Aquinas does not believe in God's duration simply because he rejects temporality in God. Aquinas explicitly addresses this issue. He argues that duration occurs as long as actuality exists. But all three endure in different ways. Eternity (God) endures without any potency. Aeviternity (angels) endure with completely actualized potency. Time (humankind) endures with progressive actualized potency. It follows, then, that the essential difference comes from the condition of the actuality that is measured.

Another way to understand the difference between God's eternity and time is to recognize that time is an accidental change, not a substantial change. A substantial change is a change in what something *is*, and an accidental change is a change in what something *has*. Aquinas points out that time is an accidental change. And only humankind, not God or angels, has accidental change. So, only humankind is in time. Although angels undergo substantial change (creation), this does not involve time. The only

mode of being that existed before angels began was an eternal mode (God). Time does not begin with angels because time involves an accidental change and angels do not undergo accidental changes.

A substantial change (for humankind or angels) is not a change in time. For no substantial change has both a before and after in time. Eternity is one pole and time the other. Hence, substantial change for humankind is a change *into* or *out of* time but not a change *in* time. But God cannot change substantially or accidentally. Since he is a Necessary Being he cannot go out of existence. And since he is a simple Being he has no accidents. Therefore, God cannot be temporal in any way, since time involves change.

God's Unity

Aquinas offers three arguments for God's unity.[9] The first is taken from the simplicity of God. An absolutely simple being cannot be more than one since to be more than one there must be parts. A simple being has no parts. An absolutely simple being is not divisible. God is an absolutely simple being. Therefore, God cannot be more than one being.

Second, God's perfection argues for his unity. If two or more gods existed, they would have to differ. And in order to differ one must have what the other lacks. But an absolutely perfect being cannot lack anything. Therefore, there can only be one absolutely Perfect Being.

Third, God's unity can be inferred from the unity of the world. The world is composed of diverse things. Diverse things do not come together unless they are ordered. But the world has an ordered unity. Therefore, there must be one Orderer of the world.

Aquinas argues that essential unity is better explained by one Orderer than by many orderers. For one is the essential cause of oneness, but many is only the accidental cause of oneness. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that there is only one cause of the world, not many. In short, this is a universe, and a uni-verse calls for a uni-tary cause (namely, One).

God's Relatability

One of the criticisms of classical theism is that an eternal, unchanging God cannot relate to a changing world. Aquinas anticipates this objection and treats it extensively under several headings.

First, there is a real relationship between the unchanging God and the changing world.[10] There are three kinds of relations: one where both terms are ideas (e.g., the same is the same as itself); one where both terms are real (e.g., a small thing compared to a large thing); and one where one is real and one is an idea (e.g., on the right side).

Since creatures are really dependent on God but God is not really dependent on them, they are related as real to an idea. That is, God *knows* about the relationship of dependence but he does not *have* it. Thus, when there is a change in the creature there is no change in God. When a person moves from one side of a pillar to the other, for example, the pillar does not change; the person changes in relation to the pillar. So, while the relationship between God and creatures is real, God is in no sense dependent in that relationship.

Aquinas is only denying *dependent* relationship, not all real ones. He is denying that God changes in his relationship with the world, not that there are real changes in God's relation with the world.

The real but unchanging relation of God to the world is made even more clear when Aquinas treats the question of how the eternal God is related to the temporal world.[11] He argues that temporal relations exist only in God's ideas of temporal things but not really. For example, to create is a temporal relation. But God is not a creature. Hence, to have a relationship with the temporal world God does not have to be temporal. In short, it makes no more sense to say God has to be temporal in order to relate to a temporal world than to say he has to be a creature in order to create.

God is really related to creatures as their Creator. But creatures are really related to God because he is their Creator. The real relation of dependence, then, lies in the creature, not in the Creator. Therefore, the relation of God to creatures is real and not merely ideal. But it is a real relationship of dependence on the part of the creatures, not on the part of God.[12]

God's Knowledge

If God is absolutely simple, then how can he know himself? All knowledge involves both a knower and a known. But God has no such duality; he is completely simple. In self-knowledge the knower and known are identical. Hence, God can only know himself through himself.[13] In

short, God knows himself by himself and in himself. And since God is simple, it follows that he knows himself simply.

Furthermore, God also knows himself perfectly. Something is known perfectly when its potential to be known is completely realized. And there is no unactualized potentiality in God, since he is complete actuality (Pure Actuality). Therefore, God knows himself perfectly. His self-knowledge is completely actualized.[14]

The fact that God knows himself perfectly does not mean God cannot know evil. For perfect knowledge of things must include knowing all that can occur to them. And evil can occur to good things (as a corruption of them). Hence, God can know evil. But things are knowable only in the way in which they are (exist). And evil exists only as a privation in good things (but not in itself). Therefore, God knows evil as a privation in a good but does not know evil in itself the way darkness is known by light but not in itself.[15]

Further, God's knowledge is identical with his essence. For if God's acts of knowledge were really distinct from his essence, then they would be related as actuality to potentiality. But there can be no potentiality in God; he is Pure Actuality. Therefore, God's knowledge and essence are really identical.[16] This does not mean that God cannot know things other than himself, however, for God is the Efficient Cause of all things.

All effects preexist in their efficient causes. Hence, whatever exists must preexist in God who is its Efficient Cause. And God knows himself perfectly. But to know himself perfectly entails knowing all of the various kinds of perfection in himself as well as those that can participate in his likeness. Therefore, it follows that God knows whatever exists perfectly insofar as they all preexist in him.[17]

Since God is unchanging and his knowledge is identical with his essence, does this mean that God cannot know changing things? Not at all. For God knows everything in one eternal now, including the past, present, and future. And God knows the future before it happens in time. Therefore, when time changes God's knowledge does not change, since he knew it in advance. In other words, God knows what we do but not the way we do. God knows the whole of time from (in) eternity, but he knows what is before and what is after the temporal now of human history.[18]

Likewise, God is one but he knows many things. For God knows his own essence perfectly. And knowing his essence perfectly entails knowing it according to every mode by which it can be known, namely, in itself and as participated in by creatures. Every creature has its own proper form in which it is like God. It follows, therefore, that God knows the form or idea of every creature as it is modeled after him.

In brief, the basis for what God knows is his own essence, but the extent of what he knows is not limited to that one essence but reaches to all things like it.[19] God's knowledge of all things in himself does not mean that he only knows other things in general but not in particular. For God's knowledge extends as far as his causality. And God's causality extends to singular things, since he is the cause of every individual thing. Therefore, God knows singular things.[20]

Furthermore, God has a perfect knowledge of everything. To know something only in general but not in particular is improper knowledge. God knows everything properly. For example, he does not know radii merely by knowing the center; he knows the radii as well as the center. This is further demonstrated by the fact that perfect knowledge involves the ability to distinguish one thing from another. God not only knows what things have in common but how they differ. Therefore, God knows all things in their individual essences. But all things preexist in God's knowledge. Therefore, all things preexist in God's knowledge not only with regard to their existence but also with regard to their individual essences. In addition, by knowing himself perfectly God knows perfectly all the different ways his perfections can be shared by others. For there is within the essence of God all the knowledge of all possible kinds of things that his will could actualize. Hence, God knows all the particular things that could ever be actualized.[21]

God knows the same things we do, but he does not know them the same way we do. Our knowledge is discursive, moving from premises to conclusions. In human knowledge there is twofold discursiveness: where one thing is known after another and where one thing is known through another. But God cannot know things sequentially, since he is timeless and knows all things eternally at once. Nor can God know things inferentially, for he is simple and knows all things through the oneness of himself. Therefore, God cannot know anything discursively.[22]

God knows things other than himself through himself—neither successively nor inferentially, but simultaneously and intuitively. In brief, God knows the created effects in himself but not through himself in a discursive way.[23] This is not an imperfection in God's knowledge but a perfection. For God's knowledge is more perfect precisely because he does not have to know things discursively through their causes but knows them directly and intuitively.[24]

God not only knows all things in and through himself, but he also causes all things by his knowledge and Being. His Being is the cause of all other beings. But God's Being and knowledge are identical. Hence, God causes all things by his knowledge.[25] This does not mean that creation is eternal because he is eternal. For God causes all things as they are in his knowledge. But that creation should be eternal was not in God's knowledge (this Aquinas accepts by faith in the authority of Scripture). So, even though God's knowledge is eternal, creation is not eternal.[26]

God's knowledge is not simply of the actual; he also knows the potential. He knows both what is and what could be. For God can know whatever is real in any way it can be known. Now both the actual and the potential are real. Only the impossible has no reality. Thus, whatever is potential is real. This being the case, it follows that God can know what is potential as well as what is actual.[27] This means that God can know future contingents, that is, things that are dependent on free choice. For the future is a potential that preexists in God. And God knows whatever exists in himself as the cause of those things.[28] Furthermore, since God is a timeless Being, he knows all of time in one eternal now. But the future is part of time. Therefore, God knows the future, including the free acts to be performed in it. Of course, whatever God knows he knows infallibly, since he cannot err in his knowledge. And since God knows future contingents, it follows that they too are known infallibly by God. They are contingent with regard to their immediate cause (human free choice) but necessary with regard to God's knowledge. God can do this without eliminating free choice, for an omniscient being can know whatever is not impossible to know. And it is not impossible for a timeless being to know a necessary end that is brought about by a contingent means.

In brief, God can know that what may-be must-be but that it can't-be. Therefore, an omniscient being (God) knows as necessarily true all

future contingents. This he can do because he knows necessarily that what will be must be. That is, if it will be and God knows it, then what he knows about what will be, must be true. An omniscient mind cannot be wrong about what it knows. Therefore the statement, "Everything known by God must necessarily be," is true if it refers to the statement of the truth of God's knowledge, but false if it refers to the necessity of the contingent events.[29]

God's Will

God not only knows, but he also wills. For wherever there is intellect there is also will, for will follows upon intellect. And there is intellect in God. Hence, there is also will in God. Further, every nature inclines to its own proper end or good. When the end is rational then the inclination is a rational inclination. But a rational inclination toward its own intelligible good is what is meant by will. And God has rational inclination toward the good of his own nature. Therefore, God has will.[30]

Although God has a will he does not change. For the object of God's will is himself, namely, the divine Goodness. And whatever is in one's self necessitates no movement outside one's self to attain. Hence, God does not have to move outside himself to attain his own proper end. That is, God's essence is his own end; there is no end outside of God. And will is an inclination toward one's own end. So, there is will in God inasmuch as he inclines toward his own good. Furthermore, will also loves and delights in what is possessed. God loves and delights in the possession of his own nature. Therefore, God has will in the sense of delight but not in the sense of desire.[31]

Simply because God wills things only in himself does not mean that he wills only himself For it is in accord with the nature of being to communicate its good to others. And God is Being par excellence; he is the source of all being. Hence, it is in accord with the nature of God to will beings other than himself.[32] So God wills things other than himself in and through himself. God is not other than himself, but he can will things other than himself in himself. For will implies a relationship. Hence, although God is not other than himself, yet he wills things other than himself.[33] Just as God understands other things through himself, so God wills others through himself.

For what is moved by itself to act is not moved by another. Hence, God is not moved by another when he wills to create through himself.[34] But

in willing things other than himself, God is not moved by any insufficiency in himself but by the sufficiency in himself, that is, by his own goodness. Therefore, willing other things through his own sufficiency denotes no insufficiency in God.[35] Just as God knows many things (truth) through the oneness of his essence, he can will many things through the oneness (good) of his will.[36]

For Aquinas, God is a Necessary Being and what he wills he does so with necessity. But there are two ways God wills things with necessity. He can will things with absolute necessity—his own goodness. This God must will; he cannot choose otherwise. Or, God can will things with conditional necessity, such as willing the goodness of creatures. This God need not will, but if he does will it then, of course, he cannot thereby not will it. But he does not have to will it to begin with. Now whatever is willed by conditional necessity is not absolutely necessary. Creation is willed by conditional necessity.

Of course, God wills other things because of his own goodness but not as necessitated by it. For God can exist without willing other things. God need only will his own goodness necessarily and other things contingently. Therefore, these other things need not be willed with absolute necessity. It is necessary to God's will that he will his own nature necessarily. But it is not necessary to God's will that he will created goods necessarily. Hence, it is not necessary that God will anything other than himself. But God did will things other than himself. God must have willed these other things voluntarily.[37]

It would seem that God must will things necessarily. For as a Necessary Being he must know necessarily whatever he knows. It would seem, then, that he must will necessarily what he wills. Aquinas responds as follows. Divine knowing is necessarily related to the created thing known, because knowledge exists in the Knower (God), who is one with his essence. But divine willing is not necessarily related to the created thing willed, since willing is of the things as they exist in themselves outside of the necessity of the divine essence. Hence, God knows necessarily what he knows but does not will necessarily what he wills. Further, all things God knows exist necessarily in God, but nothing exists necessarily outside him. But God needs only to will necessarily what is necessarily to his own

nature. Therefore, God needs only to will other things contingently, that is, as they exist in themselves outside of himself.[38]

Further, God's will is the cause of all things. For all created effects preexist in God according to his nature. God's knowledge is identical with his nature. Hence, all created things preexist in God's knowledge. Now will is the inclination to put into act what one knows. Therefore, all created effects flow from God's will.[39] Of course, God must bestow good on all he chooses to create; God cannot create evil. But it is not necessary that God will any other being or good than himself. Therefore, God need only bestow good on what he chooses to create.[40]

As to whether God's will has a cause, Aquinas gives a negative answer. God's will *is* the cause of all things, and what is the cause of all needs no cause at all. For in God the means and the end preexist in the cause as willed together. Hence, the end willed is not the cause of God's willing; rather his willing is the cause of the end (and means) willed. And since all things preexist in the First Cause (God's will), then there is no cause for God's will (for God's will is the First Cause and there is no cause of the First Cause; rather, it is the cause of everything else[41]).

God's will can never fail. For the will of God is the universal cause of all things. Therefore, the will of God never fails but is always fulfilled, for what falls from God's will in one order returns to God's will in another order. For example, what falls from the order of his favor returns to the order of his justice. Particular effects may fall short of particular forms but not of their universal form. For example, something may fail to be a person or an animal, but it cannot fail to be a being. But the failure of a particular cause is included within the success of the universal cause. So, when particular causes fail, the universal cause does not fail. God cannot fail.[42]

Aquinas distinguishes, however, between the antecedent and consequent will of God, not with regard to his will in itself but regarding the thing willed. God wills antecedently that all should be saved. But God wills consequently that some will be lost, namely, those whom justice demands. But what is willed antecedently is not willed absolutely but only conditionally. Only the consequent is willed absolutely in view of all the circumstances. Of course, God wills some things through secondary causes. And first causes are sometimes hindered through defects in secondary causes. For instance, the locomotion of the body is hindered through a bad

leg. Likewise, God's antecedent will is sometimes hindered by a defect in a secondary cause. But his consequent will is never frustrated. For first universal causes cannot be hindered by defective secondary causes, any more than goodness as such can be hindered by evil. And God is the universal First Cause of being. Therefore, God's will cannot be hindered.[43]

Neither can God's will be changed. For he is omniscient, and what he knows will be, will be. God's will is in perfect accord with his knowledge. Therefore, God's will is unchangeable. This does not mean that God does not will that some things change, but that God's will does not change even though he does will that other things change.[44] Of course, the Bible speaks of God repenting, but God repents only in a metaphorical sense. Actually, God knew from eternity if people would repent. And God's will includes intermediate causes such as human free choice. So God knows what the intermediate causes will choose to do. And God's will is in accord with his unchangeable knowledge. Therefore, God's will never changes, since he wills what he knows will happen. That is to say, what is willed by conditional necessity does not violate human freedom, since what is willed is conditioned on our freely choosing it. God wills our salvation only conditionally. Therefore, God's will to salvation does not violate human free choice; it utilizes it.

The Nature of God Defended

The relevance of Aquinas is evident in the current critique of classical theism by process theologians. The rationale for rejecting Aquinas's view of God has been stated most forcefully by Schubert Ogden and Charles Hartshorne. Their objections can be put in the form of five antinomies.

The Antinomy of Creation

Ogden insists that if God is a Necessary Being and yet his will is one with his essence, then creation cannot flow freely from God, as Aquinas would have it. Hence, if creation is free, then God cannot be a Necessary Being. For if God necessarily willed creation, as his nature demands, then he was not free in creating.[45]

Aquinas's answer is simple and to the point: "As to things willed by God, we must observe that He wills something of absolute necessity; but this is not true of all that He wills." For example, "God wills the being of

His own goodness necessarily. . . . But God wills things other than Himself in so far as they are ordered to His own goodness as their ends."[46] That is to say, God is necessary goodness and this he must will necessarily. All other things are contingent and their goodness is willed contingently. For whatever is in God's nature is there necessarily, but it is not in the nature of God that everything flow from him necessarily.[47] Therefore, God can be a Necessary Being and yet creation can flow from him freely. Ogden's objection fails to show Aquinas's view is incoherent.

The Antinomy of Service

According to Ogden there is no meaningful sense in which Aquinas's God can be served.[48] Service is doing something for God. But, according to Aquinas, God is immutably perfect and thus there is really nothing one can do for him. What can we give to a Being who literally has everything? For Ogden, God is "statically completed perfection." There is nothing we can add to him.

First, Ogden misunderstands Aquinas's view of God. God is not "statically completed perfection." Rather, he is Dynamic Act, Pure Actuality. Second, Aquinas would admit that one cannot literally add some perfection to the nature of the absolutely perfect Being God is. But, Aquinas would hasten to add, this does not mean that we cannot do *anything* for God. A perfect God does not *need* our service, but he does *want* it. That is, He does not want it because He *lacks* it but because he *delights* in it. Scripture tells us that "the Father seeks such to worship Him" (John 4:23)—for his glory and for our good. What, then, can we give to the God who has everything? Worship. Service. Why? Because he wants it for His glory and for our good. Finally, it is utterly presumptuous for finite and imperfect creatures to think that they can add anything to the infinitely perfect Creator. It is, however, humbling to know that such an exalted Being even wants (although he does not need) our service to achieve his ends in furthering his kingdom.

The Antinomy of Relationship

According to Ogden, the God of Aquinas is unrelatable to the world. For all genuine relationships involve give and take, or mutual dependence. But according to Aquinas, the world is dependent on God, but God is not dependent on the world. But if God is completely independent of the world,

then he is unrelatable with the world. He cannot really interact with the world, as the Bible describes him doing.[49]

Here again, Aquinas would agree that God is not dependent on the world, but would deny that this means God cannot have a real relationship with the world. To claim, as Ogden does, that all true relationships involve mutual dependence is wrong. It is gross anthropomorphism. Just because all real relationships among creatures involve mutual dependence does not mean that this is so of creatures' relations to the Creator. Further, Aquinas shows clearly that there is a real relationship between creatures and Creator; it is simply not a relationship in which God depends on creatures. God and humankind are really related whether humankind is on the right side or moves to the left side. But it is humankind who changes, not God. Likewise, God enters into real relationships with changing creatures, but he does not change; they do.[50]

The Antinomy of Supreme Reality

Hartshorne objects to Aquinas's view of God on the grounds that either God must include all reality or else he cannot be supreme: "the supposition that the supreme reality is not all-inclusive implies that it is but a constituent of the totality, and so not the supreme reality after all."[51]

This objection is based on an equivocal use of the phrase "include all reality." If it means God must include all reality in his Being (essence), then Aquinas would reject it, since creatures are not part of the essence of God. Furthermore, if this is what it means then Hartshorne has begged the question in favor of his panentheism (all-in-God). If, on the other hand, "include all reality" means include it either in himself or in his power, then Aquinas would agree. For all reality preexists in its Cause (God) either actually (as does God's own essence) or potentially (as does creation). That is, God has the active power (ability) to create something other than himself. In this sense, he is all-inclusive. On the other hand, God is not identical with creation. If he were, he would be both created and uncreated, necessary and contingent, which is impossible. Finally, Hartshorne's objection is based on a univocal concept of being, whereas Aquinas shows that being is to be understood analogically (see Chap. 10). If being is different in Creator and creatures, then their being is not the same as his. Hence, Hartshorne's objection fails. For when Aquinas says the world is *in* God he does not mean it *is* God. It preexists in God's power but it does not

coexist with his nature. Creation is dependent on God, but being finite, it is not identical with God.

The Antinomy of Contingent Truth

Hartshorne also rejects traditional theism because there is "the contradiction of a God held to be without accidental properties, although having knowledge of contingent truth. Thus he knows that a certain world exists which might not have existed. . . . And still, none of his properties or qualities was admitted to be contingent!"[52]

But how can God know the contingent if he is a necessary Being whose knowledge is identical to His Being? Again, Aquinas answered this problem hundreds of years in advance. All of God's knowledge is necessary, even his knowledge of contingents. Simply because an event is contingent does not mean that God's knowledge of it is also contingent. God knows everything that can be known (both actual and possible) in a necessary way, even if a thing known is not necessary. For example, God knows for sure what will happen freely. In Aquinas's own words, "things known are contingent because of their proximate causes, while the knowledge of God, which is the first cause, is necessary."[53] So the event is necessary from the standpoint of God's knowledge, but free from the vantage point of its immediate cause. There is no contradiction involved here at all.

Many of the questions now being discussed by process theologians were anticipated and answered by Aquinas. He demonstrates how God can be unchanging and yet related to a changing world. Just as a pillar does not change when a person moves, even so God remains unchanged as he relates to his changing world. God is not dependent on the world; the world is absolutely dependent on him.

Most of the objections leveled against the traditional theistic understanding of God's knowledge are answered by Aquinas's distinction between what God knows and the way he knows. It is evident that an eternal and unchanging Being cannot know the way we know, since we know in a temporal and changing way. This is a limitation on us, however, not on God.

Protestant theology, whether Calvinistic or Arminian, is dependent on Aquinas's view that God is all-powerful and omniscient. Without these attributes there is no predestination, whether based on foreknowledge (as

Arminians claim) or not (as Calvinists hold). In fact, if the basic metaphysical attributes of God, as articulated by Aquinas, are not preserved, then all of orthodox Catholic and Protestant theology collapses. Herein is another powerful reason for not neglecting the major contribution of Aquinas to the contemporary discussion about God.

AS A CHRISTIAN, AQUINAS BELIEVED in the existence of God because God has revealed it in his Word (Gen. 1:1). He also believes that God has revealed himself in his world (Rom. 1:19-20). Consequently, Aquinas holds that it is possible to know God from his creation. But contrary to popular perception, Aquinas spent very little time on proofs for God's existence. In his massive *Summa theologiae* he treats the question only briefly.[1]

The Arguments for God's Existence

Aquinas offers five arguments for God's existence. Forms of all of them were used by his predecessors. There is little unique about them, except perhaps the metaphysical system involved. Many of them were utilized by Plato and Aristotle. All of them were used by Maimonides and other medieval theists before Aquinas.

The Argument from Motion

This argument is listed first because it is apparent to the senses that things are moving. The argument can be stated as follows:

1. Things change (motion being the most apparent form of change).
2. Whatever changes has the potential for change.
3. But no potential can actualize itself.
4. And there cannot be an endless series of actualizers.
5. Therefore, there is a First Actualizer.

In support of the fourth premise, Aquinas notes that an infinite series is impossible because subsequent movers move only when they are moved by the First Mover. In fact, there cannot be any intermediate efficient causes between the First Cause and the effect, only instrumental ones. The First Mover is moved by no other; and this First Mover is God.

The Argument from Efficient Causality

Aquinas's second argument for God is from an efficient cause. Aristotle argued only to God as a Final (purposing) Cause. Others, like Plato, saw God as a Formal Cause. But Aquinas believes that everything

that exists needs an efficient cause. The argument can be summarized as follows:

1. There is an order of efficient causes in the world.
2. But nothing can be the cause of its own being.
3. And no series of efficient causes can cause their own being.
4. Therefore, there must be a First Efficient Cause.

Aquinas supports the second premise by arguing that if something were its own efficient cause, then it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. An infinite series is impossible because if there is no First Cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, or even intermediate, cause. Therefore, a First Efficient Cause (God) is necessary.

The Argument from Contingent Beings

The third argument is from what Aquinas calls "possible beings." By this he means beings of which it is possible that they not exist. Possible beings are contrasted with a Necessary Being which, by nature, has no possibility of nonexistence. The argument from contingent beings can be summarized as follows:

1. Some things exist but can not exist (i.e., possible beings).
2. And something has always existed.
3. But possible beings do not ground themselves.
4. Therefore, there must be a Necessary Being.

In support of the first premise, Aquinas observes that whatever comes to be and ceases to be cannot be a Necessary Being. For a Necessary Being must necessarily be. Only a contingent being can not be. The second premise implies the self-evident principle that nothing cannot cause something. Hence, if there were ever a state of total nothingness, then there would always be nothing, since nothing cannot give rise to something. Since something now is, then something must always have been. Further, the only thing that can ground a contingent being is a Necessary Being. For if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist. And if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist begins to exist only through something already existing. And the something that always existed must be a Necessary Being, not another contingent being.

Therefore, there must be a Necessary Being as the cause of all contingent (possible) beings.

The Argument from Gradation of Perfection

The argument from gradation of perfection is in one respect the most distinct.[2] Although Aquinas is Aristotelian in his philosophy, this argument seems very "Platonic." It is based on the premise that there are degrees of perfection among finite things, some being more perfect than others. Like the other arguments, however, it is one from effect to cause, since Aquinas insists that the Highest is always the cause of the lower. The argument can be summarized as follows:

1. Some things are more or less perfect.
2. More or less perfection can be known only by comparison with what is most perfect.
3. But the maximum of a kind is the cause of the rest of that kind.
4. Therefore, there must be a Most Perfect Cause.

The second premise is based on the obvious truth that we cannot know that something falls short of the standard unless that standard is known. The third premise is explained by noting that all good things are good only because they participate in what is Good. So what has goodness in one degree or another has it only because it shares in what is Goodness by its very nature. From this Aquinas concludes that there must be something that is the cause of being, goodness, and every other perfection —God.

The Argument from Design

The final argument Aquinas offers is from what he calls "the governance of the world." Unlike the first three, which are basically cosmological-type arguments from efficient causality,[2] this is a teleological argument. Unlike William Paley's teleological argument from a watch to its efficient cause (a watchmaker), this one is an argument from final causality. It can be summarized as follows:

1. Every agent—even a natural agent—acts for an end.
2. Nov what acts for an end manifests intelligence.
3. But natural agents have no intelligence of their own.
4. Therefore, they are directed to their end by some Intelligence.

The first premise is simply the self-evident principle of teleology or finality (see Chap. 6). That even natural things act for an end is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, in order to obtain the best results. But, in support of the third premise, whatever lacks knowledge cannot move toward an end, unless it is directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence. Therefore, some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end—God.

The Basic Metaphysical Proof for God

Many Thomistic scholars believe that behind the five proofs for God, especially the first three or four, is one basic argument that can be found in Aquinas's tiny but influential work, *On Being and Essence.*

The Statement of the Metaphysical Argument

Whatever belongs to a thing is caused either by the principles of its own nature or else by something extrinsic to it. For example, risibility (the ability to laugh) is caused by rationality, since only rational beings have the ability to perceive the incongruous, which is the essence of humor. On the other hand, the sun is the cause of light in the air, since the sun is outside of our atmosphere.

But being cannot cause itself; a thing cannot bring itself into existence. A self-caused being is impossible.

Therefore, every being whose essence is not to exist must be caused by another. That is, every being whose essence is distinct from its existence is caused by another. For if it is not of its very essence to exist, then it could not exist. But whatever exists but could not exist does not account for its own existence. It needs another to ground its existence.

Every being caused by another is dependent on that which is not caused by another but exists in and of itself. Such a being is by definition a being that cannot not exist, that is, a Necessary Being. Therefore, a Necessary Being exists as the cause of every other being that exists but need not exist.

A Restatement of the Metaphysical Argument

Since Aquinas understands God in terms of Pure Act and all creatures as compositions of actuality and potentiality (i.e., act and potency), his argument can be restated as follows:

1. Changing beings exist.
2. All changing beings are composed of act and potency.
3. No potency can actualize itself.
4. Only Pure Act can actualize being.
5. So, all finite beings are actualized by Pure Act.

The first premise is evident to Aquinas. Change is an undeniable fact of finite existence. But anything that changes passes from potentiality to actuality. We both observe change in others and experience it in ourselves. Change is undeniable. Although Aquinas did not have occasion to address the point, he would have agreed that anyone who denies change changes in the very process of that denial. For to claim that everything has always been changeless overlooks the fact that there was a change in the one making that very claim. This is obvious from the fact that there was a change in consciousness from before making the claim to after making the claim.

Any being that is truly and eternally changeless would not have a change in its consciousness. It could never come to know anything; rather, it must always know what it knows. Likewise, anyone who changes in knowledge, as we undeniably do, cannot be changeless. Only an omniscient being never changes in what he knows. Hence, it follows that all who come to know, as we unquestionably do, are changing beings.

The second premise is evident from the very definition of change. Change means to pass from a state of potentiality with regard to the change to a state of actually having it. Rocks, for example, have no potential to learn the Pythagorean theorem. Hence, no rocks actually know it. Metal has the potential to be made into a cooking pan but jello as such does not. When metal is made into a pan then this potential has been actualized.

Likewise, a being that changes must have the potential for that change. Otherwise, it could not have had that change actualized. For example, if a being can come into existence or pass out of existence, then it must be composed in its very being of actuality and potentiality. It must have actuality, since it actually exists. And it must possess potentiality, since it has the potential in its being to come into or go out of existence. Therefore, its very being must be composed of actuality and potentiality.

This leads to the third premise. No potentiality for being can actualize itself. The mere potentiality to be something cannot account for why it is that. The possibility of existence does not explain why something actually exists. So potentialities cannot actualize themselves. Only something that is actual can actualize. If a potential to exist has been actualized, then it has passed from a state of potentiality to a state of actuality. It went from not being to being. But nonbeing cannot produce being. Nothing cannot produce something. Only something can produce something. Thus, any potential for existence must be actualized by something that already exists. Only actuality (act) can actualize.

This leads us to the fourth premise. Only Pure Act can actualize being. Not every act can actualize the act of being in something. Only Pure Actuality (Act) can actualize a potentiality to exist. For everything composed of actuality and potentiality has its potentiality actualized. But it cannot actualize its own potentiality. Thus, there must be some Pure Actuality that is never being actualized but is simply and eternal in act. This Pure Act and this alone can actualize the existence of something else. It alone is a Necessary Being; everything else is contingent. Pure Act alone is a Must-Be; all else may or may not be. But whatever can be and is, exists only because what is and cannot not be caused it to exist. Only Existence can cause something to exist. Nonexistence does not cause existence. The potential to be cannot actualize itself. Therefore, what is Actual, and has no potential not to be, is the cause of what is actual but has the potential not to be.

It is noteworthy that in this form of the argument for God's existence there is no need to refute the possibility of an infinite regress. For the very first and only Being that causes any other being to exist must be Pure Actuality. Only a being with no potentiality to exist can cause the existence of another. If it’s being is caused, then it cannot cause the being of another. For if it is dependent for its own being, how can it cause the being of another? Whatever is dependent for its own being must depend immediately on a being that is not dependent for its being, namely, an Independent Being. Therefore, there cannot be even one intermediate link between the being that is being caused and the Cause of its being, to say nothing of an infinite number of links.

The conclusion, then, is that all finite beings—however many there may be—are actualized by the one Pure Actuality that exists. Everything composed of actuality and potentiality is actualized by what is not composed of act and potency but is Pure Act. Every finite being is caused by the one being that is not finite, that is, the Infinite Being. All contingent beings are caused by the Noncontingent Being, namely, a Necessary Being. Also every changing being is caused by the Unchanging Being. And every temporal being is caused by the Eternal. That is, every characteristic of finite being points to a corresponding negative characteristic of its Infinite Cause. Since Pure Act has no potency, it cannot change. It cannot be in time, be dependent, be composed, or anything else that involves a potentiality to be actualized. From this Aquinas develops the so-called negative attributes of God, that is, the transcendent nature of God from which we must negate all finite, limiting aspects.

What, then, can we know positively about God? If Pure Act has no potency, then in what sense can we know about it from its effects? If it differs from its effects in that it has no potentiality, then how is it similar? Aquinas answers that Act communicates act. Pure Act resembles its effects in that they too are actual. They are not mere potentials, but a composition of actuality and potentiality. So Act is different from what it causes in that it has no potency but is similar in actuality. For Pure Act cannot produce another Pure Act. The Creator cannot create another Creator. If something is created, then it cannot be the Untreated Creator. A Necessary Being cannot make another Necessary Being. Likewise, a Necessary Being cannot not exist, but a being that is created *can* not exist. Hence, a being that comes to be cannot be the Being that cannot come to be but necessarily is. Since this is the case, then the only kind of being a Necessary Being can make is a contingent being. The only kind of being Pure Act can make is one with act and potency. Therefore, the creature must differ from the Creator in that the creature has potency; but the creature must be similar to its Creator in that it has actuality. This fact is the basis for the real analogy between creature and Creator (see Chap. 11).

Objections to Aquinas's Arguments for God

Most of the traditional objections to Aquinas's basic argument for God's existence widely miss the mark and none is telling. Consider the

following typical arguments, mostly stemming from Hume and Kant, all of which Aquinas could easily have answered.[3]

Finite Beings Need Only Finite Causes

This objection fails because every finite being or effect is limited, and every limited being is presently caused by some Being. Thus there must be a Cause that is not limited but that is the Unlimited Limiter of every limited thing that exists. The First Cause cannot be finite or limited because if it were limited (i.e., caused), then it would need a cause beyond it to ground its limited existence. For every limited being is caused. But Pure Act of existence as such is unlimited. If there is a limited existence, then something must be limiting it. And the Actuality that provides the limits for everything else that is actualized must itself be unlimited in its existence. The First Cause must be uncaused, and an Uncaused Cause cannot be a limited cause. It must be the Unlimited or Infinite Cause of everything else.

The Concept of a Necessary Being Has No Meaning

Terms like "necessary" and "infinite" are derived from their relationship to what is dependent upon them. Their meaning is, in fact, twofold. First, such terms are negative. God is neither limited nor contingent. We know what these limitations mean from experience. So, by contrast, we know that God does not have any of these limitations. A negative term, however, does not denote a negative attribute. It is not the affirmation of nothing; rather, it is the negation of all contingency and limitation in the First Cause. The positive content of what God is derives from the causal principle. He is Actuality because he causes all actuality. He is Being since he is the Cause of all being. As the Cause of all being his Being cannot be caused. As the ground of all contingent being, he must be a Necessary (non-contingent) Being.

There Is No Way to Prove the Principle of Causality

This criticism is based on Hume's epistemological atomism—the idea that all empirical impressions are entirely loose and separate. Hume believes that there is no empirical way to establish a necessary causal connection for sensible experience. But Aquinas's cosmological argument is not based merely on empirical observation but on metaphysical necessity. Hume himself does not deny that things have a cause for their existence: "I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that anything might arise without

a cause."[4] Indeed, it would be ontologically absurd to suppose that something could arise from nothing. The principle of causality used by Aquinas is that every limited being has a cause for its existence. This principle is not based in any mere conceptional or definitional necessity but in the fundamental reality that nonexistence cannot cause existence.

The need for a cause of existence is rooted in the nature of finite, changing beings as composed of existence (act) and essence (potency). Existence as such is unlimited; all limited existence is being limited by something distinct from existence itself (this limiting factor will be called essence); whatever is being limited is being caused (for to be limited in being is to be caused to be in a certain finite way; a limited existence is a caused existence); therefore, all limited beings are caused beings. Stated another way, all limited beings are composed beings; they are composed of existence and essence—an essence that limits the kind of existence they can have. Likewise, an Unlimited Being is an uncomposed Being (i.e., a Simple Being). Such a Being has no limiting essence as such. Its essence is identical with its unlimited existence. The need for causality, then, is derived from an analysis of what finite being is. Upon examination, finite being is seen to be caused being, and caused being must have a cause of its being.

Theistic Arguments Are Not Persuasive

Whether anyone is convinced by this argument will depend on several factors. First, granting the soundness of the argument, persuasiveness will depend in part on one's understanding of this argument. Further, once the mind understands the argument, it is a matter of the will whether one assents to it. No one is ever forced to believe in God simply because the mind understands that there is a God. There may be personal factors beyond the analysis here that lead a person to remain uncommitted to God. Theistic arguments do not automatically convert. On the other hand, persons of good will who understand the argument ought to accept it as true.[5]

An Infinite Series of Causes Is Possible

As already noted, the very First Cause of any contingent being must be a Necessary Being. There cannot be even one intermediate causal link between the Creator and his creatures. The very First efficient Cause outside of beings whose existence is not being actualized must be the

Actualizer of being. At best, any intermediates would have to be mere instrumental causes *through which*, not *by which*, the efficient causality is being exercised.

Furthermore, an infinite series of simultaneous and existentially dependent causes is not possible. There must be a here-and-now ground for a simultaneous series of causes, none of which would otherwise have a ground for its existence. An ungrounded infinite regress is tantamount to affirming that the existence in the series arises from nonexistence, since no cause in the series has a real ground for its existence. Or, if one cause in the series grounds the existence of the others, then it must be a First Cause (and hence the series is not infinite). Otherwise it turns out to be a cause that causes its own existence (which is impossible), while it is causing the existence of everything else in the series.

Confusion sometimes arises because mathematical (abstract) infinite series are mistaken for metaphysical (actual) infinite series. An actual infinite series of real finite beings is impossible. For in such a series it is always possible to add one more. But since one more than infinite is impossible, it follows that such a series must always be finite.

The Cosmological Argument Depends on the Invalid Ontological Argument

This Kantian criticism is not applicable to the argument of Aquinas. Aquinas begins with existence, *not* with pure thought. The first premise is that "Something exists," not Anselm's ontological idea of "that than which nothing greater can be conceived."

Furthermore, Aquinas's argument proceeds with ontologically grounded principles and not with mere rationally inescapable thought. It is based on the metaphysical truth that "nothing cannot cause something" rather than the rational assertion that "everything must have a sufficient reason."

Finally, Aquinas's cosmological argument concludes with a real Ground of all finite being as opposed to only a logically Necessary Being. That is, it ends with Pure Actuality as the cause of existence for all limited existence, as opposed to a Being that logically cannot be. This cosmological argument does not begin with a priori rational principles, and at no point does it borrow from the purely conceptual to complete its task. In other words, it is not based on the invalid ontological argument.

Necessity Does Not Apply to Existence, But Only to Concepts

This objection is self-defeating. For either the statement "Necessity does not apply to existence" is itself a statement about existence, or else it is not. If it is a statement about existence, it is self-defeating, for it claims to be both necessary and about reality while maintaining that no necessary statements can be made about reality. On the other hand, if it is merely a meta-statement, or statement about statements (and not really a statement about reality), then it is uninformative about which kind of statements may or may not be made about reality. In brief, the only way to deny the possibility of existentially necessary statements is to make (or imply) one in the very denial, which is self-falsifying.

The Cosmological Argument Leads to Metaphysical Contradictions

Kant offers several alleged contradictions or antinomies that he thinks result from applying cosmological argumentation to reality. At least three of these antinomies apply to Aquinas's cosmological argument.

THE ANTINOMY ABOUT TIME

If we assume that time applies to reality, then the world is both temporal and eternal. *Thesis:* The world must have begun in time or else an infinity of moments has elapsed before it began, and this is impossible (an infinity of moments can never be completed). *Antithesis:* The world could not have begun in time, for this implies that there was a time before time began, and this is contradictory.

In response to the first antinomy, Aquinas would note that Kant's view of time is incorrect. Time is not a continuum of successive moments that exist without beginning or end. Thus, creation did not begin in time that was already there; creation is the beginning of time. The only thing "prior" to time is eternity, and eternity is prior in a causal but not temporal way.

Further, Kant's objection overlooks the possibility of an eternal creation, which theoretical possibility Aquinas upholds, although he believes the world began from divine revelation.[6] In any event, Kant's objection does not affect the argument based on a here-and-now cause of existence. For this type of cosmological argument is not dependent on a specific view about the origin of creation but only its present conservation in existence. The finite world demands a cause right now, regardless of whether it began in time or is eternal.

THE ANTINOMY OF CAUSALITY

It must be true that the world both has a First Cause and does not have a First Cause. *Thesis:* Not every cause has a cause or else a series of causes would not begin to cause as they in fact do. *Antithesis:* A series of causes cannot have a beginning, since everything demands a cause. Hence, the series must go on infinitely.

This antinomy has already been addressed. The antithesis is incorrect in stating that every cause needs a cause. According to Aquinas's principle of causality, only *finite* things need causes. Thus the Cause of finite being is not finite. Only finite causes need a cause; the First Uncaused Cause needs no cause, because it is not finite.

THE ANTINOMY ABOUT CONTINGENCY

Kant insists that everything must be both contingent and not contingent, if we assume that these concepts apply to reality. *Thesis:* Not everything is contingent or else there would be no condition for contingency. In other words, the dependent must be depending on something that is not dependent. *Antithesis:* Everything must be contingent, for necessity applies only to concepts and not to things.

Aquinas would reject Kant's antithesis. For, as noted, there is no way to deny that necessity can apply to reality without making a necessary statement about reality. Only an ontological disproof could possibly establish Kant's point. And ontological disproofs are self-defeating. Further, the cosmological argument has already concluded that something necessarily exists. The validity of this argument is the refutation of Kant's contention that necessity does not apply to existence.

The Conclusion Does Not Prove a Theistic God

How can the conclusion of Aquinas's cosmological argument be identified with a theistic God any more than with polytheistic gods, a panentheistic God, a pantheistic God, or even the atheist's material universe? Any of these could be the "Uncaused Cause" of the cosmological argument. A Thomistic answer to this question will relate to each of these alternatives in turn.

First, the Uncaused Cause is not many polytheistic gods. There cannot be more than one unlimited existence as such; more than the Most is not possible. The central premise of Thomism is that Act as such is

unlimited and unique. Only act as co-joined with potency is limited. In order to differ, one being would have to lack some characteristic that the other one had. But any being that lacked some characteristic of existence would not be an unlimited perfect existence. In other words, two infinite beings cannot differ in their potentiality, since they have no potentiality; they are pure actuality. And they cannot differ in their actuality, since actuality as such does not differ from actuality as such. Hence, they must be identical. There is only one Unlimited Cause of all limited existence.

Second, the Uncaused Cause cannot be identical with the material universe. As ordinarily conceived, the material universe is a limited, spatiotemporal system. It is subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics and is running down. But an Uncaused Cause is unlimited. Further, since space and time imply limitations to a here-and-now kind of existence and God is not limited, then God cannot be identical to the space-time world. God is *in* the temporal world as its very ground of continuing existence, but he is not *of* the world in that it is limited and he is not.

If, in response, we claim that the whole of the material universe is not temporal and limited as are the parts, this would only demonstrate what Aquinas asserts. For his conclusion is that there exists beyond the contingent world of limited spatio-temporality a "whole" reality that is eternal, unlimited, and necessary. In other words, there is a God beyond the limited, changing world of experience. It is a substitute for God that admits there is a "whole" reality that is "more" than the experienced part of reality and that has all the essential metaphysical attributes of the theistic God.

Third, the Uncaused Cause is not identical with the God of panentheism. Dipolar theism or process theology affirms that God has two poles: an actual pole (which is identified with the changing temporal world) and a potential pole (which is eternal and unchanging). Such a conception of God must be rejected for the following reasons. The conclusion of the cosmological argument demonstrates the need for a God of Pure Actuality with no potentiality (pole) at all. Further, God cannot be subject to limitations, composition, or spatio-temporality, since he is unlimited in his Being. Moreover, God cannot have poles or aspects, since he is absolutely simple (i.e., uncomposed) with no duality at all. He is a simple and unlimited existence as such, with no limited pole. A partly limited unlimited existence is a contradiction. In addition, God cannot be subject to change.

For anything that changes must be composed of actuality and potentiality for change. Change is a passing from potentiality to actuality, from what can be to what actually becomes. But since existence as such has no potentiality, it follows that it cannot change. If something changes, it proves thereby that it was not pure actuality but possessed some potentiality for the change it underwent. A pure and unlimited actuality cannot change.

The God of panentheism or process theology is a confusion of the world process with the God who grounds that process. God is *in* the process as the unchanging basis for change, but God is not *of* the process. God is the Cause of all finite, changing existence, but he is beyond all finitude and change. God changes relationally (by entering into changing relationships with the world), but he does not change essentially. When a person moves from one side of a pillar to the other, there is a real change in relationship, but there is no change in the pillar.

Fourth, the Uncaused Cause is not the God of pantheism. Pantheism affirms that an Unlimited and Necessary Being exists, but denies the reality of limited and finite beings. For Aquinas change is a fundamental, undeniable part of finite existence. Pantheism is contrary to our experience of change in the world. It affirms that all change, including that in our own minds and consciousness, is unreal. It would mean that no river really moves, no tree grows, and no person actually ages. If there is any real change, there must really be changing beings distinct from God, for God is an unchanging Being.

There Is No Need for a Here-and-Now Cause of Existence

Unlike other cosmological arguments based on a beginning of the universe or contingent being, Aquinas's argument is not dependent on a past but a present Cause of being. This gives rise to the objection that there is no need for a present cause of being. There are two aspects to objections of this kind. Some contend that it is not meaningful to speak of simultaneous cause-effect relations; effects generally follow causes temporally. Others simply say that there is no need to insist that the world needs a conserving cause; an originating cause, if anything, would be sufficient.

First of all, simultaneous causality does make sense. There is no contradiction in saying that an effect is being effected at the very instant it is being caused. This is clearly the case with the relation between the premises (cause) and the conclusion (effect) of a syllogism. Cause and

effect are simultaneous, for the instant we take away the premise(s), at that very instant the conclusion does not follow.

Likewise, the causal relation between my face and the image in the mirror is simultaneous. What clouds the understanding of the simultaneity of causality is the confusion of an effect with an aftereffect. For example, when I throw a ball, it continues to move even after I am no longer throwing it. A clock continues to run after I wind it. In each of these and like examples, the aftereffect is directly and simultaneously effected by some cause. The force of inertia keeps the ball moving; the forces of tension and reaction keep the mechanism of the clock moving. If any of these forces would go out of existence, at that very instant the aftereffect would stop dead. If inertia ceased the very instant after the ball left my hand, the ball would instantly stop in midair. Likewise, the clock would stop ticking the instant the physical laws affect it were not operative. Every so-called aftereffect is really an effect of some simultaneous cause. In like manner, there are no existential aftereffects. Whatever is being caused to exist right now must have something causing it to exist right now.

A basic distinction will help illustrate the point. The artist is not the cause of the being of a painting, but only the cause of the becoming (or coming to be) of the painting. The painting continues to be after the artist stops painting it. In like manner, a father does not cause the being of his son but only the son's becoming, for when a father dies his son continues to live.

Now it is necessary that finite beings have a cause not only of their becoming but also of their here-and-now being. For at every moment of their existence they are dependent for their existence on another. They never cease to be limited, finite, contingent beings. And as such they demand a cause for their existence, for every finite being is caused. Hence it does not matter whether we are referring to John Doe at moment one of his existence or at moment two or moment three. He is still existing, that is, he still has a received existence, that is, he is still receiving his existence from something beyond him. Changing the moment of his dependent existence does not make him a nondependent existent. Perhaps some of the problem would be removed if we did not talk of existence (as though it were a whole package received at once) but of existing (which is a moment-by-moment process). Maybe the word "being" is even more misleading in this regard.

No one receives the whole of his being at once, nor even the next instant of it. Each creature has a present "be-ing." Existence comes only a moment at a time. But at each moment of a dependent be-ing there must be some Independent Be-ing on which that be-ing is depending for that moment of being. In this respect, the distinction between the Latin *esse* (to be) and *ens* (being, thing) is helpful. God is Pure Esse and our present esse is dependent on him. Pure Existence must existentialize our potentiality for existence; otherwise we would not exist. God as Pure Actuality is actualizing everything that is actual and not merely potential. Hence, it is the present actuality of all that is actual that demands a causal ground.

The Act-Potency or Contingent-Necessity Models Are Arbitrarily Imposed on Experience

This objection states that it is only because we have modeled reality as contingent or composed of actuality and potentiality that we are forced to conclude that there is a Necessary Being or Pure Actuality. This, proponents insist, is an arbitrary and loaded way to view reality, which can be conceived in other ways.[7]

In response, Aquinas would point out that the contingency-necessity model is not arbitrary but logically exhaustive. Either only Necessary Being exists, or else there is a contingent being(s) as well as a Necessary Being. But there cannot be merely contingent being(s). For contingent beings do not account for their own existence, since they are but might not be.

To put it another way, either everything is one pure undifferentiated Actuality or something else also exists. But there cannot be two Pure Acts, since act as such is unlimited and unique. There cannot be two Ultimates or two Infinite Beings. So whatever else exists must be a combination of actuality and potentiality. But since no potentiality can actualize itself, then whatever composed beings there are must be actualized by Pure Actuality.

For Aquinas there is no need to prove something exists. That is self-evident, undeniable. And the proof that something that exists is contingent or composed of an actuality and a potentiality not to be is that beings change. Change is a passing from a state of potentiality to actuality. And since nothing can actualize its own potentiality, then there must be an Unactualized Actualizer of every other thing that is actual.

The Cosmological Argument Commits Modal Fallacies

Modal logic is based on the distinction between what is possible and what is necessary. This form of reasoning has developed its own list of fallacies. Alvin Plantinga argues that it does not follow from the fact that it is possible for all the parts of my car to break down at one time or another that it is necessary that at one time all the parts will break down.[8] Thus, although all contingent beings possibly do not exist, they do not necessarily not exist at one time and thus need no universal cause of existence. Of course, Plantinga is correct in this assertion and thereby throws some formulations of the argument from contingency into doubt. But his objection does not apply to Aquinas's argument, since it is not concerned with showing that all things that *could* not exist need a single cause to produce their existence, but that all things that *do* exist (although possibly could not exist) need a cause for their present existence, both individually and in toto.

A second possible charge of committing a modal fallacy would be to say that it is illegitimate to infer from the fact that the world necessarily needs a being as First Cause that the world needs a Necessary Being as First Cause. Again, as it is stated, that charge would be correct, but our cosmological argument does not make that inference. God is not considered a Necessary Being because the argument necessarily demonstrates his being. He is called Necessary Being because ontologically he cannot not be. We learn of his Necessary Being not from the rigor of our premises, but because existentially a First Cause must be a Necessary Being.

The mistake of many theists, especially since Leibniz, is to cast the cosmological argument in a context of logical necessity based on the principle of sufficient reason. This ultimately leads to contradictions and an invalidation of the argument. In contrast to this procedure, Aquinas uses the principle of existential causality to infer the existence of an Unlimited Cause or Actualizer of all existence.[9] Thus, his conclusion is not rationally inescapable, but actually undeniable. In brief, if any contingent being exists, then a Necessary Being exists; if any being with the potentiality not to exist does exist, then a Being with no potentiality not to exist must exist.

Volumes have been written on Aquinas's arguments for God's existence. Aquinas himself devoted only two pages of his great *Summa* to them. Nonetheless, there is a profundity in their simplicity that still captivates the minds of great thinkers. Behind his famous "Five Ways" is

one less famous metaphysical proof that has withstood the assaults of critics down through the centuries. Beginning with the undeniable fact that some changing finite being exists, Aquinas argues convincingly that there must be an Infinite, Eternal, unchanging Cause of this finite being. For if something comes to be, then Something must always have been. Nothing cannot cause something, so something must always have been. This proof of an eternal Necessary Cause of all contingent being still stands as a monument among rational arguments for God's existence.

Introduction

Aquinas held to a hierarchy of beings: God is the highest, then angels, followed by human beings (see Appendix 3), then animals, lower forms of life, and matter. He wrote: "The higher a nature the more intimate what comes from it, for its inwardness of activity corresponds to its rank in being. Inanimate bodies hold the lowest place of all; from them nothing emanate save by the action of one thing on another"[1]

God is Pure Actuality; angels are completed actualities, and humans are progressively actualized. God has no potency; angels are completely fulfilled potency, and humans are uncompleted potentiality. God is an eternal Being; angels are aeveternal. God is non-temporal; humans are temporal, but angels are neither; they are aeveteranl. Angels are like God in that by nature they are not in time, but they can be related to time. They have no before and after in their being, but can be related to it. By contrast, humans are temporal beings.[2] God is Pure Existence, God has no Form; angels are pure Forms, and humans are a composition of form and matter.

As a hylomorphic unity of form and matter, humans are unique. Plato held that humans *are* a soul that merely *have* a body. Not so for Aquinas who held that humans are a soul-body unity; that is their essence. As such, humans can change both substantially (in what we *are*) and accidentally (in what we *have*). Substantial change would *be* something going out of existence. An accidental change would be the loss of a limb. Angels have no accidents (what is not of a substance but inheres in a substance). So, angels cannot change accidentally, as humans can. They undergo a substantial change when they are created, and could undergo a substantial change, if they were annihilated.

The Origin of Human Beings

Humans are created beings. They came into existence, and they could go out of existence, if God willed them to do so. The first human being created by God was Adam and the second was his wife Eve.[3] They were created in the image of God which consists of human’s intellectual likeness to God. Aquinas wrote, "the image of God, in its principal signification, namely the intellectual nature, is found both in man and in

woman."[4] Again, "Our being bears the image of God so far as it is proper to us, and excels that of other animals; and such being belongs to us in so far as we are endowed with a mind."[5] Of course, the image of God includes our moral capacity to love God and be like Him."Thus likeness may be distinguished from image in two ways, as prior to it, and as existing in more things. . . . But likeness may be considered in another way, as signifying the expression and perfection of the image."[6]

Aquinas believed in a literal, historical Adam and Eve who lived in a literal Paradise called Eden,[7] fell into sin by disobedience to God, transmitted sin to their posterity,[8] and consequently eventually died physically (Rom. 5:12).

When a new human being comes into existence, for example, Adam's children, grandchildren, and so on, God creates a new soul and puts it into their body, which body was generated through their parents. Aquinas rejected the Augustinian traducian view which affirmed that both soul and body of human beings are generated through their parents. He believed that this view was wrong because only God can create, and all creative acts are direct and immediate.[9]

Due to the adoption of an Aristotelian view of the nature of a soul and its relation to its body, Aquinas held the curious view that "the embryo has first of all a soul which is merely sensitive, and when this is removed, it is supplanted by a more perfect soul which is both sensitive and intellectual . . ."[10] The intellectual soul is created by God. . . . "[11] The male embryo first receive a vegetative soul, then it received a rational (i.e., human) soul which comes some forty days after conception. Females did not receive their human souls until eighty days after conception. Since Roman Catholicism has pronounced that all human life begins at conception, Aquinas's view has been rejected by them. However, some Catholic scholars have argued that it is "Thomistic" to hold that an individual human life begins at conception because the question of when human life begins has been updated by science and has replaced the outmoded science of Aristotle and adopted by Aquinas.[12]

The Nature of Human Beings

There are several important characteristics of a human being. The most important ones include the following.

HUMAN BEING ARE CREATED

Most fundamentally, human beings are creatures. They came into being by an act of God's will. They do not flow from God necessarily, but freely. There was a time when they were not, and when they began it was a creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). Unlike pantheists who believe humans came into existence *ex material* (out of pre-existing matter), Aquinas held that humans came from God (by creation), but they were not made *ex Deo* (out of God). So, humans were not made out of something nor out of God; they were made out of nothing. That is, they were not made of something, either "God-stuff" or any other kind of "stuff."

HUMAN BEINGS ARE CONTINGENT

According to Aquinas, only God is a necessary Being, that is, a Being that *cannot* not be.[13] That is, if God exists, then He must exist by His very nature. On the other hand, creatures by their very nature are contingent beings, that is, beings that *can* not be. So, they are "may be" kinds of beings, while God is a "must be" kind of Being.

So, there is no intrinsic immorality in human beings. God wills them to live on forever, but this is God-willed immortality, not intrinsic immortality (as Plato held). For God could, if He wished, will any and all human beings out of existence. In biblical terms, "He upholds all thing by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3). And as the angels chanted in the Apocalypse, "you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created" (Rev. 4:11).

It is because human beings (and all other finite beings) are contingent that Aquinas is able to formulate his famous "third way" to demonstrate the existence of God, namely, the argument from contingency. He states it as follows, "Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. Therefore we cannot but admit the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity."[14]

HUMAN BEINGS ARE COMPOSED ACT AND POTENCY

As creatures, including human beings, are composed of actuality and potentiality (act and potency). Only God is uncomposed Pure Actuality. As composed beings, humans have actuality, since they do exist. But they also have potency, since their non-existence is possible. So, they are composed in their very being by act and potency.

HUMAN BEINGS ARE COMPOSED OF SUBSTANCE AND ACCIDENTS

Humans are also composed of substance and accidents. Substance is what something is in itself—the essence of a thing. Accidents did not exist in and of themselves but only as they inhere in a substance. For example, tallness is an accident which inheres in some human beings. It is not part of their humanness since one can be short and still be human. Likewise, smartness is accidental to humanness for some are not smart. Size, color, shape, and weight are all accidents.

In addition to substance and accidents, humans have properties. They are not of the essence of a human, as rationality is, but they flow from our essence. Risibility (the ability to laugh) is not of our essence, but it does flow from it. For only rational beings, which can have a sense of incongruity, can laugh (with all due respect to the hyena).

HUMANS ARE CORPOREAL (*BODILY*)

The body is composed of matter. Matter is extended in space and time. It is three-dimensional, multiple and divisible. Inanimate matter is the lowest on the scale of being. Aquinas wrote: "Living things we term animate, things lacking life inanimate."[15] Matter, however, is good and not evil. The human body was declared good by God (Gen. 1:31). "Our body's substance is not from an evil principle, as the Manichees imagine, but from God. And therefore by the friendship of charity [love], by which we love God, should we cherish the body."[16] Furthermore, "To be united to body is not to the detriment of soul, but for its enrichment. There is the substantial benefit of completing human nature, and the accidental benefit of achieving knowledge that can only be acquired through the senses."[17]

HUMANS HAVE A SOUL

"Soul is the first principle of life within living things about us: living things we term animate, things lacking life inanimate."[18] "The soul, therefore, is not a body, but the actuality of a body, by analogy with heat whereby the principle of warmth, which is not itself a body, is a kind of actuality of body."[19] "The intellective soul ranks lowest in the scale of intellectual substances in that it lacks the natural inborn knowledge of truth with which pure spirits are endowed, but must piece together fragments of truth perceived though the sense."[20]

HUMANS HAVE INDIVIDUAL SOULS

Each human being has his own distinct soul. For "That a unique mind should be shared by all men is quite out of the question."[21] Indeed, Aquinas affirmed that "Of all errors the most indecent attack our heritage of mind. One such has sprung for the words of Averroes, who announced that there is a universal mind for all men."[22] Aquinas wrote, "Now that we shall be at pains to show that it is contrary to the Christian faith, or this is sufficiently apparent to all. Since mind is the only deathless part of the soul, were the diversity of minds be fused, the upshot would be that the unique mind alone remained after death, and so there would be no prospect of rewards and punishments."[23] He added, "This thesis [of one universal soul for all men] is also impossible on Aristotle's doctrine that the mind is a part or power of the soul, which soul is man's substantial form. For there cannot be a unique form of several things numerically diverse, as it is impossible for them to possess one being."[24]

THE SOUL ANIMATES THE BODY

Thomas held that "Because united to body as form, the soul is in each part of the body and throughout the whole organism. It is not an accidental form of the body, but the substantial form, which is the form and actuality, not merely of the whole, but also of each part."[25] "The soul is entire in each part of the body according to its wholeness of perfection and being, not of power. . . . "[26]

DEATH IS WHEN THE SOUL LEAVES THE BODY

When the soul leaves the body death occurs. "Therefore when the soul has departed, just as we do not speak of what remains as an animal. . . . So it is with the hand, the eye, the flesh, the bones."[27] For the human body is naturally corruptible unless it is animated by a soul.

THE SOUL SURVIVES THE DEATH OF THE BODY

But when the body corrupts the soul it must survive as a separate entity if the soul is immortal, as in fact it is."[28] So, "The human soul keeps its existence when the body breaks up."[29] The soul is the form of the body and fitted to it to make one essence, a human being. Yet because it is a rational and spiritual form, the functions of the rational soul are not dependent on the body and, hence, can and do survive the dissolution of the body. For example, just as the meaning of a sentence (the form) can survive when the paper on which it was written is destroyed (the body), even so, a

soul can survive when the body dies. Of course, the soul is incomplete without its body and awaits its reunion at the resurrection (see below).

THE HYLOMORPHIC UNITY OF BODY AND SOUL

Aquinas held a hylomorphic (*Hyle*=matter; *morphe*=form) view of the unity of soul and body. He wrote: "It follows that man is not just a soul, but a compound of body and soul."[30] The soul is to the body what form is to matter. Humans are a hylomorphic unity of soul and body. The soul is to body as form is to matter. In this Aquinas followed Aristotle (*de Anima*). In contrast to Plato, who believed that man *is* a soul and merely *has* a body, Aquinas held that humans are a souled-body unity. They have only one nature—a human nature. For Plato the soul is to the body what a rider is to a horse. Or, to use a different illustration, the soul is to the body what meaning is to words. A sentence, for example, has meaning (form) and words (matter). They are united in that there is no meaning in the words as isolated parts. But when words are formed by a mind they convey meaning. Meaning penetrates the whole sentence and unifies it into a linguistic whole which expresses the meaning. So, the human body is composed of physical parts. It is the unity of these parts which is called "body." The same parts without a soul to unify and animate these parts would be merely dust.

As for the hylomorphic unity between soul and body, Aquinas announced that

> In the first place the union obviously cannot come about in the manner of a *mixture* nor by touching properly so called, for contact is between bodies. Neither by *merging* nor by being *fastened* together can one perfectly single thing be constitute from intellectual and from bodily substance. There is, nevertheless, a mode of contact by which spirit can be joined to body, not by mutual joining of quantities, but by the touching implied in the action of one thing on another. This is the touch of power, not of quantity; it is feasible between spirits and bodies: intellectual substance can act on bodies and set them in motion. Yet though spirit and body are united as regard action and reaction, they do not thereby make up one thing simply so called.[31]

Aquinas added, "Now a natural unity cannot be constituted from two permanent realities unless they be related as *substantial form and matter.*"[32] "If we hold that the soul is united to the body as its substantial form, then

the co-existence of several essential different souls in the same body cannot be entertained."[33]

Aquinas added elsewhere,

> Plato and his followers laid down that the intellectual soul is united to the body as mover to the thing moved; the soul is to the body as the sailor in the ship; the union of soul with body is by contact of power. But this is not without embarrassment, for man, made up from such a union of soul and body, would not be one thing simply speaking, or a substantial whole, but an accidental whole. To avoid this consequence, Plato held that man was not a thing composed of soul and body, but that he was a soul using a body. But this is impossible, for animals and men are natural and sensible things, which would not be the case were bodies and bodily organ not part of their essence, in other words, were they "wholly soul." Further, if true, then "It [animal souls] would not cease with the body, and the souls of animals would be immortal." Furthermore, "after the departure of the soul, the body and its parts would remain specifically the same. Nor would the very being of the human body be quickened by the soul. Moreover, death, which consists in the separation of soul and body, would not be the dissolution of the animal.[34]

Again, he wrote: "We should assert that the mind, the principle of intellectual activity, is the form of the human body. The body's first and animating principle is the soul."[35] And "If anyone wishes to deny this, let him explain how otherwise he can attribute the activity of understanding to the individual man. Everyone experiences in himself that it is veritably himself who understand."[36] For "The soul's power is non-material though it be the cause of matter, spiritual though the cause of bodies, and dimensionless though the cause of quantities."[37]

Just how do body and soul unite? Are they not opposites, and how can opposites unite? This is an irresolvable problem only if one defines them after Descartes in an incompatible way. Namely, if mind is non-material thinker, and body is a non-thinking matter, then one does end up with a "ghost in a machine" problem. However, if it be remembered that both soul and matter have *being* in common, then the contradiction

vanishes. For both a material thing which has being and a mind that has being have a common contact points. They are different but not completely opposite. While this does not resolve the mystery of just how they relate, it does resolve the contradiction.

Precisely how soul and body are united into an essential unity has been a matter of speculation. But Eric LaRock has suggested that the whole question is a category mistake since there is no intermediary between soul and body. As Aquinas said in his commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima*, "There is no more reasons to ask whether soul and body together make one thing than to ask the same about wax and its impression sealed on it. . . . "[38] As La Rock put it, "the two metaphysical parts of the human composite, soul and body, hold a direct or immediate relationship to each other, such that the compositional unity of soul and body constitute and integrated, living unit."[39]

The Special Powers of a Human Being

In addition to being a body-soul unity in essence, human beings have special powers. A power is an ability humans *have*, but not something they *are*. For example, humans have the power to think, but humans are not thought itself. Human's have the power to will, but they are not will itself. That is, these powers are abilities human beings posses, but not things we are by our very nature. They are not of our essence.

HUMANS HAVE THE POWERS OF SENSATION

Among the powers humans have are the powers of sensation and the powers of thought. We can sense things via our five senses. We can see, hear, feel, taste, and touch.[40] These we share in common with the higher animal species. However, there are powers unique to humans, namely, the rational powers of abstraction. For Aquinas, all knowledge begins in the senses. There is nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses, except the mind itself.

HUMANS HAVE INTELLECTUAL POWERS

Human beings also have the power to abstract universals from particulars. That is, by studying a human (or humans), we can abstract the universal called "humanness." Apart from the debate as to whether we have to look at many examples of a thing before we can abstract its essence or form (which Aristotle held) or at only one (which Aquinas held), these universals do not exist in and of themselves (in some eternal world of

Platonic Forms), nonetheless, contrary to nominalist (like William Ockham), they are not pure abstractions. For Aquinas, the universal forms, like humanness, are rooted in the reality of the individual (or individuals) from which they were abstracted. That is, universals are real.

Despite the fact that Aquinas was an empiricist, holding that all knowledge begins in the senses, he was also a realist, insisting that there is more in the senses than sense knowledge. For the mind knows reality through the senses; it does not merely know sense images. The senses are like windows of the soul. We are seeing the real world through the senses. We are not merely seeing the window; rather, we are seeing reality through the senses ("windows") by the powers of the mind.

According to Aquinas, the mind has the power by its agent (active) intellect, with the aid of the divine Light, to abstract the intelligible species (abstract form) when the sense data and to thereby know objects in the real world. In an excellent work by Max Herrera,[41] he demonstrates how Aquinas was able to modify his hylomorphic view of human beings to make it possible to know the real world through the intelligible species. That is, he showed that they are that *through which* one knows, not *that which* one knows.

The intellect has the power of apprehension (the first act of the intellect) and the power of predication or judgment which is the second act of the intellect. It is in the second act that predications can be made about reality, such as, "John is a rational being." And it is here where truth comes into play, that is, in whether the affirmation corresponds with the real world. There is also a third act of the intellect called reasoning by which we can draw conclusions from two or more judgments, such as, (1) John is a rational being; (2) All rational beings can draw conclusions from premises; (3) Therefore, John can draw conclusions from premises.

HUMAN'S HAVE VOLITIONAL POWERS

Not only can humans think, but they can also chose. They have a will, as well as a mind. However, the mind does not coerce the will for the will is the ability to choose contrary to what the mind judges to be the best part. Of course, the will always chooses something for the good it sees in it. However, not all apparent good is the real good. Hence, evil is possible.

Free will and evil. God created only good things (Gen. 1:31), and one of these good things (powers) is called will. It is good to be free, but

this good freedom carries with it the power to do evil. As Aquinas put it, "For were some evil caused by an evil, since evil does not act save by virtue of as good. . . ., it follows that good itself is the primary cause of evil." For "that which is not, is not the cause of anything. Hence, if evil be caused by something, this must be a good."[42] Thus, God made evil possible by making man free (which is a good thing), but this good thing called freedom makes evil actual. In short, God made evil *possible* by making man free, but man evil *actual* by the free choice he makes.

The relation between the Divine and human wills. The relation between the divine will and the human will is that of primary causality and secondary causality. The power by which the human will operates is given by God since He is the Cause of all things. All things pre-exist in God as their ultimate and efficient cause. But the exercise of this power is in accordance with the human will.

Human beings are the efficient, albeit secondary, cause of their own free actions. Thus Aquinas adds, "And for this reason we maintain that the action [power] pertaining to the sin is from God, but the sin is not from God."[43] Even though God (as Primary Cause) gives us both the power to choose and is involved in the very action of choosing,[44] nonetheless. "The will [secondary cause] contributes something when it is moved by God. And therefore although the movement of the will is from outside as from a first principle, nevertheless it is not coerced."[45] For God moves creatures in accordance with their nature, and man is by nature a free being. "Therefore, if God moves man’s will, this is evidently not opposed to freedom of choice, just as God’s activity in natural things is not contrary to their nature."[46]

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The nature of free will. Human free choices are not coerced. Free acts are not forced. If it is forced, it is not free, and if it is free then it is not forced.

Free choice is voluntary. According to Aquinas, free will involves a voluntary act. For "there must needs be something voluntary in human acts."[50] This is so “since man especially knows the end of his work, and moves himself, in his acts especially is the voluntary to be found."[51]

Human free will has the power of alternate choice. Further, the will has the power of choice "because its power is not limited to one effect; indeed the will has the power to produce this or that effect, and consequently is undetermined to either."[52]

A free choice is a self-determined action. In response to the question "Whether the will moves itself." Aquinas answers that "It belongs to the will to move the other powers, by reason of the end which is the will’s object." So, "the will, through its volition of the end, moves itself to will the means."[53] Thus, free choice is not *determined by another*, or *undetermined*, but it is a *self-determined* action. If it were *caused by another*, then they would be responsible for it. And it is irrational to assume actions are *uncaused*. For actions and events do not occur without a cause. Therefore, every free choice must be *self-caused*, that is, caused by the self (person**).**

So, a free act is a self-determined act. It is not determined (caused) by another for then it would not be free. Nor is it undetermined since every act has a cause. Hence, it must be self-determined. That is to say, it is caused by one’s self. What causes the action? Technically, it is not the free will that causes it; rather, it is the person (with the power of free will) who causes the free action. For I (the free person) am not my will; I have a will, but I am not a will. Likewise, I have a mind, but I am not mind. Mind and will are not the essence of human beings. Rather, they are the powers which rational and volitional beings use to think and to chose. So, what causes my free actions? I do, and I do it by the power of free choice which God gave to me. Thus, it is not a "what" but a "who" that causes human free actions. And this "who" or person that causes the free actions does so by means of the power of free choice which he has, but not by what he is.

Free will and the four causes. Aquinas held "That good is the material cause of evil has already appeared. As regards the formal cause, evil had none; instead it is rather the privation of form. Similarly, it had no

final cause, but is rather the privation of due order to the proper end. . . . Evil has an efficient cause; this, however, is indirect, not direct."[54] As we will see (below) the direct and immediate cause of evil is free will. For Aquinas concluded that "the action pertaining to the sin is from God, but the sin is not from God."[55]

Free choice is not of necessity. Thomas states clearly that "Man does not choose of necessity." He states that "the reason for this is found in the very power of reason. For the will can tend to do whatever the reason apprehends as good. Now the reason can apprehend as good not only this, viz, to will or to act, but also this, viz., not to will and not to act." Also, "the reason can consider the nature of some good, and the lack of some good, which has the nature of an evil." Hence, "since choice is not of the end, but of the means . . . , it is not of the perfect good, which is happiness, but of other and particular goods. Therefore, man chooses, not of necessity, but freely."[56]

Free choice cannot be coerced. Another characteristic of free choice is that it cannot be forced. Violence is contrary to free choice. Thus, irresistible grace or persuasion is also a contradiction in terms. It is just a euphemistic way of saying "forced freedom" which is contradictory. C. S. Lewis agreed, saying, "But you now see that the Irresistable and the Indisputable are the two weapons which the nature of His scheme forbids Him to use. Merely to over-ride a human will . . . would be for Him useless. He cannot ravish. He can only woo."[57] Or as he stated elsewhere, "When one says, ‘All will be saved,’ my reason retorts, ‘Without their will, or with it?’ If I say, ‘Without their will,’ I at once perceive a contradiction; how can the supreme voluntary act of self-surrender be involuntary? If I say, ‘With their will,’ my reason replies, ‘How, if they will not give in?’"[58] Aquinas noted that "some philosophers maintain that man’s will is necessarily moved to choose a thing . . . , But that opinion is heretical, for it destroys the reason for merit and demerit in human acts: for it does not seem to be meritorious or demeritorious for someone of necessity to do what he cannot avoid."[59] He adds, unless "it is within our power" to choose and not of necessity, "then praise and blame…are nullified."[60] In this way, a person (a free agent), by his power of free will, is the cause of evil. This free will, even after the Fall of Adam, is voluntary, not of necessity, and free from compulsion. Indeed, even though our wills are moved by God (the Primary

Cause), nonetheless, we are not coerced to do anything contrary to our wills.

Free will and the depravity of man. Of course, as a Christian, Aquinas believes in the Fall of mankind and inherited sin called "original sin" While Aquinas spoke of the inevitability to sin in general in this life, nonetheless, he believed that by God's grace each sin in particular could be resisted. He wrote: "but I the state of corrupted nature man needs grace to heal his nature in order that he may entirely abstain from sin."[61] And the question is whether human beings are free since the Fall. Aquinas made it clear how far sin affects human beings when he said, "The capital of human nature diminished by sin is the natural inclination to virtue instinctive in man as a rational being. . . . Now sin cannot destroy man's rationality altogether, for then he would no longer be capable of sin."[62] He adds, "But sin does not strike at the root, sine it does not diminish nature itself; what it does is to block the ability[63] from reaching its end; the disability consists in the interposition of a barrier. Thus, there can be an infinite lessening of virtue, for always another layer can be added, as when man piles sin on sin. Yet the instinct for right action always remains radically intact."[64] In brief, sin cannot be so great on human nature so that it destroys the human ability to sin. Sin cannot erase the image of God; it can only efface it.

As for Augustine's statement that "the man who misuses free will destroys both himself and it",[65] Aquinas replies, "the sinner has lost free will so far as concerns freedom from fault and misery, but not so far as concerns freedom from compulsion."[66]

Evil is not co-eternal with good. As Thomas put it, "Evil cannot exist but in good; sheer evil is impossible."[67] He added, "There is no justification for holding that there are two [eternal] kingdoms, one of good, the other of evil."[68] For "Quite untenable is the position that the visible things of this world are created by an evil principle, not by God."[69] He insisted that "There is not one first principle of evil as there is of good." He offers several reasons. "In the first place, the original principle of things is essentially good. Nothing can be essentially bad. Every being as being is good; evil does not exist except in a good subject."[70] "In the second place, the first principle of good things is supreme and perfect good containing all goodness in itself. Now there cannot be a supreme evil, for though evil lessens good, it can never totally destroy good. . . . " For this reason Aristotle observes that a wholly evil thing would be self-destructive."[71] "In

the third place, the very notion of evil is irreconcilable with the notion of a first principle, because evil is caused by good; also because evil can be a cause only incidentally, and therefore cannot be the first cause, since the accidental is subsequent to the essential."[72] Further, "There cannot be an evil entirely apart from good, for it has been proved that evil resides in some good. Therefore, nothing is supremely evil."[73] At this point Aquinas would agree with Augustine that good is basic to evil since if we take all the evil away from something, then it is something better. But if we take all the good away from evil, there is nothing left.[74]

The Destiny of Human Beings

All things come *from* God; all things are *fo*r God; and all things will return *to* God. Some will return for His eternal blessing (called heaven); others will return for His judgment (called hell). In either event, God is glorified, either in His goodness (heaven) or in his justice (hell).

Humans will be resurrected in their same physical bodies. Not until the resurrection of the body will these parts come back together and re-form the human body which will be reanimated by the human soul. The resurrection will be into the same body, even though it will not necessarily have all the same particles. Yet there will be a numerical identity between the physical resurrection body and the pre-resurrection body. Of course, the resurrection body, unlike the pre-resurrection body, will be immortal and imperishable. Nonetheless, the change will not be a change of bodies but a change in the body—from a mortal to an immortal body. As the apostle Paul declared, "For this perishable body must put on the imperishable . . . and the mortal puts on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:53). "In the renewal of things at the end of the world it is certain according to Catholic doctrine that all bodily creation will be improved."[75] According to Aquinas, the nature of the resurrection of the body involves several important things:

> *First, resurrecting the body will be a miraculous event*.—Thomas declared that "Since all the senses and all the members of man corrupt in death, a dead man cannot be brought back to life except by divine action."[76]. Resurrection from the dead is a miracle.
>
> *Second, it will be in an imperishable body.*—Aquinas wrote: "Although men will rise as the same individuals, they will not

have the same kind of life as before. Now their life is corruptible; then it will be incorruptible."[77]

Third, man is not complete without a body.—The human soul is fitted for embodiment (see hylomorphic unity above). So, "to be united to body is not to the detriment of soul, but for its enrichment. There is the substantial benefit of completing human nature, and the accidental benefit of achieving knowledge that can only be acquired through the senses."[78] A naked soul is lacking until it clothed again in its resurrection body (2 Cor. 5:2-3).

Fourth, it will be numerically the same body that died.—"Since the rational soul that survives remains numerically the same, at the resurrection it must be reunited to numerically the same body."[79] Of course, this does not mean that it will have all the same particles it had before the resurrection. For “not all the matter that was ever contained in those parts during man’s natural life will again be taken up, but only so much as will be enough to constitute the species of the parts in integrity."[80] Likewise, whatever was eaten by cannibals[81] or is otherwise lacking "He will supply whatever is wanting to the proper amount of matter."[82]

Fifth, it will be in a perfect body.—For "it is fitting that all natural defects should be corrected in the risen body. . . . For such defects as are found in men naturally begotten, will have no place in men restored by the resurrection."[83] Heaven is a place of perfect*ion* in which there is no place for an imperfect body.

Sixth, it will not need to eat food.—Aquinas declared that "after mortality is done away within those who have risen, the means of serving the conditions of moral life must cease also. . . . Consequently there will be no consumption of food or drink after the resurrection."[84] And "cessation of the use of good necessarily entails cessation of the exercise of the reproductive functions."[85]. Also, "the reproductive functions for mere pleasure, can have no place."[86] While all bodily organs will be resurrected with the body, "all the members of the body will have their place in the risen [body], for the preservation of nature in its entire*ty* rather than for the exercise of their normal function."[87] Just what this will be is not specified.

Aquinas also believed that "men will receive punishment or reward in the future state for the acts they perform now. This being the case, it is no more than right that men should keep the organs with which they serve the reign of sin or of justice during the present life, so that they may be punished or rewarded in the members they employed for sin or for merit."[88]

The final destiny of the lost (*hell*). According to Aquinas, hell is a real place of conscious everlasting suffering of the lost in physical bodies that will not corrupt and physical flames that will not die out. He wrote, "Their will must remain forever obstinate in evil, and at the same time they will grieve most agonizingly for the sins they have committed and the glory they have lost."[89] "Therefore the bodies of the damned will be complete in their kind, although they will not have the qualities that go with the glory of the blessed."[90] And "Although the bodies of the damned will be capable of suffering, they will not be subject to corruption." And "Consequently the bodies of the damned will suffer forever, but will not undergo dissolution."[91] So, "lost souls will also undergo corporal punishment." Therefore, "text that portend the corporeal punishment of the souls of the damned, specifying that they will be tormented by the fires of hell, are to be understood literally."[92] "So even though it is “corporeal fire" the spiritual soul experiences real pain. "This does not mean that the fire acts on the spiritual substance as it acts on bodies, by heating, parching, and consuming; its action is restrictive, as we said."[93]

Aquinas hastens to add that "The suffering of eternal punishment is in no way opposed to divine justice. Even in the laws men make, punishment need not correspond to the offense in point of time. For the crime of adultery or murder, either of which may be committed in a brief span of time, human laws may prescribe life-long exile or death. . . . In the same way it is not unjust for God to inflict eternal punishment for a sin committed in a moment of time." Accordingly, "since God is infinitely great, an offense committed against Him is in a certain respect infinite; and so a punishment that is in a certain respect infinite is duly attached to it. Such a punishment cannot be infinite in intensity, for nothing created can be infinite in this way. Consequently a punishment that is infinite in duration is rightly inflicted for mortal sin. . . ." But "if a sinner is incorrigible, so that he is obstinately fixed in sin, as we said above is the case with the damned, his punishment ought never to come to an end."[94]

However, the saved will be resurrected in the same physical body in which they lived which will be imperishable, eternal, and glorious. What is more, they will experience the blessed vision of seeing God face-to-face.

The beatific vision for the saved. Aquinas wrote of the day the saved meet God face-to face (1 Cor. 13:12): "to so sublime a vision the created intellect needs to be raised by some kind of outpouring of divine goodness."[95] He added, "Man's consummation consists in the attainment of his last end, which is perfect beatitude or happiness, and this consists in the vision of God. . . . ."[96] This blessed vision is forever. For "it follows from what has been said that those who obtain ultimate happiness from the divine vision will never fall away from it…. Therefore no one, having once become a partaker thereof, can lose it."[97] But "the will cannot be perfectly at rest until the soul is again joined to the body. When this takes place, man rises from the dead."[98]

Conclusion

So, in the resurrection of the body, Paradise Lost will become Paradise Regained. What was lost in death will be regained in the resurrection. The same bodies corrupted by death will become incorruptible in their resurrection. In short, Satan lost, and God won! Man—the whole man body and soul—will be restored in the resurrection. Satan's attempt to destroy man is defeated, and God's plan to deliver him—body and soul—is victorious. All men—both just and unjust—will be resurrected in bodies that will never die. Of course, for Aquinas, some will be resurrected to everlasting life and others to everlasting fire, according to their free choices which God ordained and they exercised (Jn. 5:25-29).

THE BIBLE REVEALS THE INFINITE GOD, but it is written in finite human language. How can limited human notions adequately describe the unlimited divine nature? For Aquinas all knowledge begins in sense experience. But no sense image taken from the world of our experience can describe the God who transcends the world. The problem, in brief, is this: How can human language, limited as it is by its dependence on our experience, possibly describe a God who is unlimited in his very nature?

The Alternatives

Basically there are only three alternatives to the question of religious language. First, what our language expresses truly about God is *univocal*, that is, entirely the same as the way he is. Second, religious language is *equivocal*, that is to say, entirely different from the way God is. Third, religious language is *analogical* or similar to the way God is. Aquinas opts for the third position for a number of reasons.

Univocal Predication of God Is Impossible

For Aquinas it is impossible that our judgments about God could be made univocally.[1] For "since God infinitely exceeds the power of our intellect, any form we conceive cannot completely represent the divine essence, but merely has in some measure an imitation of it."[2] We can have univocal concepts, but they must be applied to God in an analogical way.

Aquinas refers to analogous judgments (predications), not to analogous concepts.[3] That is, we can define our terms in the same manner when we use them of God and creatures. But we must never apply them to God in the same way we apply them to creatures. As Armand Maurer notes, "St. Thomas' doctrine of analogy is above all a doctrine of judgment of analogy, and not of the analogy of concept."[4] For God is infinite and creatures are finite. Hence, whatever is said of God must be applied to him infinitely, while whatever is said of humankind is applied only finitely. For example, both God and humankind can be called good. But good applies to humankind only finitely, since at best humankind is only finitely good. But God is infinitely good. Thus, the same term "good" (with the same definition) must be applied to God in a different way than it is applied to humankind. As Aquinas observes, "all perfections exist in creatures

dividedly and . . . in God unitedly."[5] In short, creatures can have the same characteristic as God but not in the same way that he has it. What is signified is the same, but the mode of signification is different.

This is true of anything we say of God. The term "being" is rightly predicated of both God and creatures. Yet God is Being infinitely and necessarily, while creatures have being only finitely and contingently. Hence, it is impossible that "being" should be applied in the same way to such entirely different kinds of being.

Equivocal Predication Leads to Skepticism

Perhaps our terms have an entirely different (i.e., equivocal) meaning when used of God. This argument, too, is unacceptable to Aquinas, since God has revealed himself both in nature (Rom. 1:19-20) and in Scripture. We do know many things of God; the question is how we know them.

To claim that all our statements about God have an entirely different meaning when applied to him is to admit total skepticism. This point was made emphatically by Duns Scotus,[6] and there is no reason why Aquinas could not accept it. For Aquinas is stressing the analogy of judgment, not the analogy of concepts: "It is not, therefore, in the manner of pure equivocation that something is predicated of God and other things. If nothing was said of God and creatures except in a purely equivocal way, no reasoning proceeding from creatures to God would take place. But the contrary is evident from all those who have spoken about God."[7]

Further, if we know nothing about God, then we could not even make the claim that we can know nothing about him. For it is self-defeating to claim that we know that we cannot know anything about God. It is equally self-destructive to affirm that we cannot affirm anything about God.

Analogy Is the Only Adequate Answer

If our judgments about God are neither totally the same nor totally different, then they must be similar (analogous). Analogous religious language, then, is the only way to preserve true knowledge of God. Univocal God-talk is impossible and equivocal God-talk is unacceptable and self-defeating. Only analogy avoids the pitfalls of each and provides a genuine understanding of God:

> This name God . . . is taken neither univocally nor equivocally, but analogically. This is apparent from this reason—univocal names have absolutely the same meaning, while equivocal names have absolutely diverse meanings; whereas analogical, a name taken in one signification must be placed in the definition of the same name taken in other significations.[8]

The Basis of Analogy in Religious Language

Analogy preserves a true knowledge of God because it is rooted in the very nature of God's self-expressions. Of course, God can only express himself to his creatures in terms other than himself. Thus, by its very nature such expression or manifestation of God will be limited, whereas God himself is unlimited. Nonetheless, an expression about God must express God. Hence, analogy flows from the very nature of the process of God's self-revelation.

Analogy Is Based in Causality

Aquinas bases the similarity between Creator and creature in the causal relation between them. Since God is Pure Existence and since he causes all other existence, there must be a similarity between him as the Efficient Cause and his effects. For a cause communicates itself to the effect, being causes being. The Cause of being must be a Being. For it cannot give what it does not have; it cannot produce reality it does not possess. Therefore, even though the Cause is Infinite Being and the effect is finite being, nevertheless, the being of the effect is similar to the Being that caused it. Analogy is based in efficient causality. For "we can name God only from creatures. Hence, whatever is said of God and creatures is said according as there is some relation of the creature to God as to its principal cause, wherein all the perfections pre-exist excellently."[9]

The Use of Analogy

The need for analogy is apparent not only in God's general revelation in nature; it is also essential to God's special revelation in Scripture. The Bible declares true knowledge of God. But this knowledge is contained in a book composed of human words and sentences based in finite human experience. But here again we are faced with the same problem: How can finite human concepts convey an Infinite God?

Aquinas's answer is: analogically. God is neither identical to nor totally different from our expressions about him. Rather, he is similar to them.

ANALOGICAL LANGUAGE IN SPECIAL REVELATION

The Bible is emphatic about two things in this connection. First, God is beyond our thoughts and concepts, even the best of them (Rom. 11:33). Second, human language is adequate to express the essence of God.

God is infinite and our concepts are finite; no finite concept can capture the infinite. It is also clear from Scripture that God goes beyond the limited ability of human concepts to convey his ineffable essence. Paul says, "now we see as in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor. 13:12). John says that "no one has seen God at any time" (John 1:18).

But if God is both adequately expressed in and yet infinitely more than human language—even inspired language—can express, then at best the language of Scripture is only analogous. That is, no term taken from human experience—and that is where they all come from—can do any more than tell us what God is *like.* None of them can express comprehensively what God really *is.* Religious language at best can make valid predications about God's essence. But it can never express his essence.

ANALOGOUS LANGUAGE IN NATURAL THEOLOGY

There are two basic reasons that statements made about God on the basis of general revelation are analogous. Both emerge from the demonstration of God's existence (see Chap. 9). First, the arguments for God's existence are arguments from effect to the Efficient Cause of their being." Since the effects get their actuality from God (Pure Actuality), they must be similar to him. For Act communicates act; Actuality produces actualities.[11]

Second, Pure Act cannot create another Pure Act. Pure Act is uncreated, and it is impossible to create an Uncreated Being. But if Uncreated Act cannot create another Pure Actuality, then it must create an actuality with potentiality.[12] Thus, all created beings must be composed of actuality and potentiality. They have actuality because they actually exist, and they have potentiality because they have the potential not to exist. Anything that comes into existence can pass out of existence. But if all created beings have a potential that limits their existence, then they are limited kinds of existence and their Uncreated Cause is an unlimited kind of

existence. Thus, there must be a difference between creatures and their Creator. They have limitations (potency) and he does not. It follows, then, that making statements about God based on what he has revealed of himself in his creatures must always be done with a significant proviso—God is *not* like his creatures in their potentialities but only in their actuality. Such an argument proceeds by way of negation (*via negativa*). All adequate God-talk must have this negative dimension to it. This dimension becomes apparent in the proofs for God's existence.

First, it is demonstrated that he is a Cause. This is the positive element of similarity in the analogy between God and creatures. Whatever actuality there is (not potentiality) is actually like the Actuality that gave it to them.

Second, God is an Uncaused Cause (the negative element in the analogy). Uncaused means *not* caused; it is a negative term. The same is true of the other attributes of God that emerge from the argument for his existence. For "no creature being finite, can be adequate to the first agent which is infinite."[13] God is the Infinite Cause of all finite existence. But infinite means *not* finite. It, too, is a negation. God is the eternal, that is, not terminal or non-temporal Cause. Some of the negations are not immediately obvious from the etymology of the term, but they are negative nonetheless. God is the Simple Source of all complex being. But simple here really means noncomplex. The same is true of the attribute of necessity. We know creatures are contingent, but by necessary we simply mean that God is not contingent. We have no positive concepts in our experience that can express the transcendent dimension of God's unlimited metaphysical characteristics. Therefore, the analogy with which we speak of God will always contain an element of negation. The creature is like God because Act communicates act, but it is unlike God because it has a limiting potentiality and God does not; he is Pure Actuality.

Two Kinds of Analogy: Extrinsic and Intrinsic Analogy

There is no real similarity between two parties in an extrinsic analogy. An extrinsic analogy is one where only one thing possesses the characteristic; the other is called that characteristic by its relation to it. There are two kinds of extrinsic analogy.

Extrinsic Analogy Based on Efficient Causality

In this kind of analogy a given characteristic is attributed to the cause only because it produces this characteristic in the effect, not because the cause really possesses that characteristic. For example, food is called "healthy" because it causes health in the body, not because it is healthy in and of itself.

It is clear that this analogy does not provide any real basis for knowledge of God. It simply tells us what the cause can produce, not what characteristic it actually possesses. In this kind of analogy, God would simply be called good because he produces good things, but not because he actually is good in himself. Therefore, analogy based on extrinsic attribution would leave us in a state of agnosticism about God.

Extrinsic Analogy Based on Similarity of Relations

This analogy is sometimes called the analogy of improper proportionality, because there is only an analogy in the relationship, not a real similarity between the two things being compared. Let us look at the following analogy: a smile is to a face what flowers are to a meadow. Notice that in such an analogy there is no similarity between the things being compared. A smile is not really like flowers. A smile is simply related to a face the way flowers are related to a meadow. Thus, there is merely a relationship between the two relationships, but there is no relationship between the two things being compared. Similarly, Infinite Good is related to an Infinite Being the way finite good is related to a finite being. It tells us nothing about the relationship (similarity) between Infinite Good and finite good. This is not the kind of analogy Aquinas uses to establish the similarity of Creator and creature.

Intrinsic Analogy

In an intrinsic analogy both things possess the same characteristic, each in accordance with its own being. There are two kinds of intrinsic analogy: the analogy of proper proportionality and the analogy of intrinsic attribution.

The Analogy of Proper Proportionality

In this analogy there is a proper relationship between the attribute each thing possesses and their own respective natures. Applied to God, this analogy would declare that: *Infinite Good is to a infinite being what finite good is to a finite being*. While this analogy does not explain a direct relationship between the attribute in both parties, it does inform us about the way an attribute in God is related to his essence and, by comparison, the way a similar attribute in a creature is related to its essence. But the analogy tells us nothing directly about the similarity between God and creation. Rather, it informs us more about the difference between an Infinite Being and a finite being.

The Analogy of Intrinsic Attribution

The second kind of intrinsic analogy is where both parties possess the same attribute and the similarity is based on the causal connection between them. For example, hot water causes an egg in it to be hot. The cause communicates itself to the effect. A mind communicates its intelligence to a book. The book, then, is the intelligible effect of the intelligent cause.

This is the kind of analogy on which Aquinas bases the similarity of Creator and creatures.[14] What God creates must be like him because he communicates his likeness to the effects. Being communicates being. Pure Actuality creates other actualities. This analogy of intrinsic attribution, where both the cause and the effect have the same attribute, is the basis for making true statements about God. These statements correspond to the way God really is because these characteristics are derived from him and are communicated by him to his effects. In short, the similarity between Creator and creatures is derived from the characteristics the Creator gives to his creatures.

Of course, creatures do not possess the same characteristics (say, goodness) in the same way God does. An Infinite Being possesses goodness in an infinite way, while a finite being possesses goodness in a finite way. Nevertheless, they both possess goodness, because a Good Being can only communicate goodness. Whatever falls short of God's goodness is due to the finite and fallible mode of the creature's existence; it is not due to the infinite goodness of its Cause (see Chap. 10). But the degree to which a creature has any goodness, it is good because it is like its Creator who is Goodness himself.

The Analogy between God and Creatures

All meaningfully descriptive talk about God, then, is based on the analogy of intrinsic attribution. Creatures are like the Creator because of the causal relationship between them: "Some likeness must be found between them [i.e., between effects and their cause], since it belongs to the nature of action that an agent produces its like, since each thing acts according as it is in act."[15] There are several important features of this relationship that need to be spelled out.

It Is a Causal Relationship. First, the relationship between God and the world is causal, not non-causal. For in names given to both God and creatures "we note in the community of such names the order of cause and effect."[16] Hence, "whatever is said of God and creatures is said according as there is some relation of the creature to God as to its principal cause."[17] Causality is a relation of dependency, not dualism. The creature possesses the characteristic only because it got it from the Creator. The Cause of being shared being with the being it brought into being. Act communicates some of its actuality to another. Apart from this causal relation of dependency there would be no common, shared attribute between the Creator and creatures.

The Relation Is Intrinsic, Not Extrinsic. The causal relation between God and creature is real, not merely stipulative. That is, the similarity is based on the fact that both cause and effect have the same characteristic, the latter getting it from the former. God is not called good, for example, simply because he made good things but because he *is* good. This would be an extrinsic causal relation, like hot air making clay hard. The air is not hard; it simply made the effect hard. The same hot air makes other things, like wax, soft. Both become hot because heat communicates heat. But whether one effect becomes hard or soft will depend on the condition of the thing receiving the causality. So heat producing hardness is an extrinsic causal relation. But heat producing heat is an intrinsic causal relation. It is this latter kind of causal relation that exists between God and creation.

All of creation is like God insofar as it is actual, but unlike God insofar as its limiting condition (potentiality) determines how the actuality is received. For example, the same cause (a sculptor) cannot produce the same effect in pudding and stone. Pudding simply does not have the same potential that stone does to take on a stable and lasting form. In other

words, there is a real difference in the potential, even though the same actual form is imposed on both. In like manner, the similarity between God and a creature will depend on the limited potential of that creature to receive actuality from God. Thus, creatures differ from God in their potentiality, but are like (although not identical to) God in their actuality.

The Relation Is Essential, Not Accidental. The causal relation between God and the world is *per se*, not *per accidens.* That is to say, it is an essential relation, not an accidental one. God is the Cause of the being of the world, not merely its becoming.

An accidental causal relation is one where there is only nonessential relation between the cause and the effect. For instance, musicians give birth to non-musicians. There is no essential relation between being in the class of non-musicians and being in the class of musicians. While musicians give birth to non-musicians, humans give birth to humans. This is an essential causal relation. The essential characteristics of humanness are possessed by both the cause and the effect. This is the kind of causal relation that exists between God and his creatures.

The Cause Is an Efficient Cause, Not an Instrumental One. An efficient cause is a cause *by which* something comes to be. An instrumental cause is that *through which* something comes to be. A student is the efficient cause of an exam; the pencil the student writes the exam with is only the instrumental cause. Therefore, the exam will resemble the student's thoughts, but the pencil will not. A house resembles the plan in the builder's mind, but the tools used to construct the house do not. Hence, there is no necessary connection between an instrumental cause and its effect, only between the efficient cause and its effect.

The Cause Is the Efficient, Not the Material Cause. The efficient cause is that by which the effect comes about, whereas the material cause is that out of which the effect is produced. For example, when the sun causes hotness in the clay heat is the efficient cause of heat. But the hardness it causes is due to the material conditions of the clay. Material causes are receptive to efficient causality in different ways.

Furthermore, just because God created Adam's body out of matter (its material cause) does not mean that God must be material. Efficient causes do not need to resemble their effects any more than the minds of the Wright brothers needed to have wings and a fuselage. An airplane is made

of matter, a mind is not. The visible words on this page resemble my mind (their efficient cause), but my mind is not made of paper and type. Likewise, the invisible God (Efficient Cause) is not like the visible world (material cause), nor is the material world like the immaterial God (John 4:24).

Objections to Analogy Considered

A number of objections have been raised to Aquinas's view of analogy.[18] Many of them were answered by Aquinas himself. Others must be inferred from what he said. The following is a list of the more important objections and a response from a Thomistic point of view.[19] Others are treated in more detail elsewhere.[20]

Why select only some qualities from the world to apply to God? The reason is simple. Only those characteristics are selected that flow from God's efficient, essential, principal, and intrinsic causality. For only these characteristics do not necessarily denote what is finite. And only these kinds of characteristics may be appropriately applied to an Unlimited Being. In short, things are like God in their actuality, but not in their potentiality, since God has no potentiality. He is Pure Act.

Words divorced from their finite condition are devoid of meaning. This criticism overlooks the distinction between a concept and its predication. The univocal concept of a given word remains the same; only the way in which words are predicated changes. For example, the meaning of the words "goodness," "being," and "beauty" is not emptied when applied to God; the words are merely extended without limits. That is, the characteristic indicated by an analogous predication is not negated; instead, it is released from any limiting mode of signification and is applied essentially to God. Since the perfection denoted by some terms does not necessarily imply any limitations, there is no reason why perfection cannot be predicated of an Unlimited Being. In Aquinas's terms, that which is signified is the same; only the mode of signification is different.

Analogy rests on the questionable premise of causality as its basis. It is true that Aquinas bases analogy in the similarity that must exist between an efficient cause and its effect. This is true because Being communicates only being. The Cause of existence cannot produce perfection that it does not "possess." If God causes goodness, then he must be good. If he causes

existence, then he must exist. Otherwise the absurd consequence ensues that God gives what he does not have to give.

An analogous predication of God fails to identify the univocal element. This objection would hold for non-univocal concepts, but it is not true of univocal concepts that have analogical predications. It is certainly true that we need to have a univocal understanding of what is being predicated. But this does not mean that this concept must be predicated in a univocal way. For a finite being does not have qualities in an infinite way. The only way to avoid equivocation when predicating the same perfection of both finite being and Infinite Being is to predicate it differently (i.e., analogously), according to the mode of being that each is.

The real relationship between Creator and creatures is not univocally expressible. Again, this objection fails to distinguish between the thing signified and the mode of signification. Being is univocally conceived but analogically predicated of God and finite beings. The concept of being or existence is understood to mean the same thing, namely, being is "that which is or exists." God exists and a person exists; this they have in common. But God exists infinitely and independently, whereas a person exists only finitely and dependently; in this they are different. In short, *that* they both exist is univocally conceived; *how* they each exist is analogically predicated. For God exists necessarily while people exist only contingently.

According to Wittgenstein, the distinctions among univocal, equivocal, and analogical expressions are obsolete. Expressions receive meaning from their use in the context of language games. Each language game is autonomous insofar as there are no universal criteria for meaning. Words that carry over from game to game or words with similar meanings bear family resemblances, but we can never isolate a core meaning they must share. Thus Wittgenstein believes that the division of language into univocal, analogical, and equivocal breaks down before this dynamic understanding based on usage.

Two things can be noted in response. First, unless there is an essential, as opposed to a purely conventional, meaning to language, then all meaning (and truth) is relative. But it is self-defeating to claim that no meaning is objective. Furthermore, if there were no objective meaning, then anything could mean anything to anyone, even the opposite of what was meant. This would result in linguistic (and social) chaos.

Second, the distinctions among univocal, equivocal, and analogical expressions are not arbitrary. In fact, they are logically exhaustive; there are no other alternatives. For either a term is understood (or even applied) in entirely the same way (i.e., univocally), in an entirely different way (equivocally), or in a similar way (analogically). Wittgenstein does not offer any alternatives. Rather, as applied to objective reality, his view reduces to equivocal God-talk. For although he accepts meaningful God-talk, insofar as it is based in meaningful religious experience, nonetheless, it is not really talk about God. It is really talk about religious experience. God remains part of the mystical and inexpressible, at least as far as descriptive language is concerned.[21]

A general theory of analogy does not work. As long as analogy is tied to the metaphysics of intrinsic causality, it works. In fact, as has been shown, analogy seems to be the only adequate answer to the problem of religious language. All negative God-talk implies some positive knowledge of God. But positive affirmations of God are possible only if there are some univocally understood concepts that can be applied to both creatures and Creator (as Scotus argued). On the other hand, since God is infinitely perfect and creatures are only finitely perfect, no perfection found in the finite world can be applied univocally to both God and creatures. But to apply them equivocally would leave us in skepticism. Hence, whatever perfection is found in creation that can be applied to God without limits is predicated analogically. The perfection is understood univocally (in the same manner), but it is predicated analogously (in a similar manner), because to affirm it univocally in a finite way of an Infinite Being would not truly be descriptive of the way he is. And to affirm it equivocally in an infinite way would not be descriptive of him at all. Hence, a univocal concept drawn from the finite world can be predicated of God only analogically.

The meaningfulness of religious language has been a persistent philosophical problem. Does it merely evoke an experience about God, but tell us nothing about who this "God" is? Aquinas's response is to note first of all the three alternatives: our talk about God is either univocal, equivocal, or analogical. Then, he analyzes the alternatives. It cannot, he shows, be equivocal, since we do know something about God. Indeed, it is self-defeating to claim that we cannot make any meaningful statements about

God. For that very statement implies that we know what the word "God" means. By the same token, God-talk cannot be univocal, since we cannot predicate an attribute of an Infinite Being in the same way that we do of a finite being. God is "good," for example, in an unlimited way, while creatures are "good" in a limited way. Both are good, but not in the same way. But if God-talk is neither univocal nor equivocal, then it must be analogical. This analogy of similarity is based in the Creator-creature relations. As Cause of being, God is Being. He cannot give what he does not have to give. Being produces being; Act actualizes other actualities. Since God cannot produce another Necessary Being like himself, he must produce a contingent being. But contingent beings, unlike a Necessary Being, have the potentiality to not be. Hence, while God is Pure Actuality, everything else is a combination of actuality and the limiting potentiality not to be.

Thus, when we predicate things of God taken from creation, we cannot predicate any of their limitations to him, only the actuality they received from him. In this sense, creatures are both like and unlike God, and herein is the analogy. If we forget Aquinas's contribution here, then we are left with either skepticism or dogmatism. That is, either we know nothing about God, or else we assume that we know things in the same infinite way that he knows them.

AQUINAS DEALT WITH MANY ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM OF EVIL throughout his writings. In fact, he has a whole book titled *On Evil* that deals with it comprehensively.[1] The treatment here is an extended and more textually based discussion of the topic. We will begin with the question of the reality of evil.

The Reality of Evil

Atheism denies the existence God and affirms the existence of evil. Pantheism affirms the existence of God and denies the existence of evil. Aquinas affirmed the reality of both. However, as we will see next (under "The Nature of Evil"), he did not believe that evil exists in and of itself. Rather, it exists only in another. Evil is not a being, but it is a *real privation* in a being. For example, even though being maimed is the lack of a limb and not a thing in itself, nevertheless, it is real to be maimed—it is a *real lack* in a real thing. Likewise, blindness is the lack of sight, but as every blind person knows, blindness is real. It is not an illusion. This leads us to our next point.

The Nature of Evil

What then is the nature of evil? St. Augustine before Aquinas had struggled with the problem of the nature of evil. Coming from a dualistic Manichean cult, Augustine had great difficulty explaining how evil was not a thing (substance). For theists like Augustine and Aquinas, God alone is eternal, and everything He created was good. If so, what, then, is evil? Only pantheists deny the reality of evil,[2] but how can a theist explain it?

The Dilemma of Theism about the Nature of Evil

If evil is not something outside of God, and it cannot be anything inside of an infinitely perfect theistic God, then what is it? The problem can be summarized this way: (1) God is the author of everything; (2) Evil is something; (3) Therefore, God is the author of evil.

Now rejecting the first premise leads to dualism which Aquinas rejects (see below). Likewise, denying the second premise leads to illusionism which denies the reality of evil (see above). Neither is acceptable to Aquinas. What, then, is the solution? To say that God did not

create all things is to deny God’s sovereignty. To claim that evil is nothing denies its reality. However, to admit that God caused all things and that evil is something is to acknowledge that God caused evil—a conclusion rejected by Aquinas. But this conclusion seems to follow logically from these premises. Hence, unless one rejects the truth of at least one of the premises, it would seem that he must accept the truth of the conclusion.

A Response to the Dilemma: Evil is a Privation in a Good Thing

Aquinas, like Augustine before him, responded that evil is not a thing or substance. Rather it is a lack or privation of a good thing that God made. Evil is a deprivation of some particular good. Aquinas wrote: "Evil precisely as such is . . . a deprivation of some particular good inhering in a particular good."[3] But “privation is not an essence, but is non-existence of something in a substance. Therefore evil is not a real essence."[4] But he hastens to say that while "Evil denotes the lack of Good. Not every absence of good is an evil." For "Mere negation does not display the character of evil, otherwise non-existents would be evil. . ."[5] For "A thing is called evil for lacking a perfection it ought to have; to lack sight is evil in a man, but not a stone."[6]

Evil, then, is a deprivation of some good that ought to be there. It is not a mere negation. In short, everything God created was good. Evil is a corruption or privation that occurred to things after God created them.

Of course, to say that evil is not a thing, but a lack in things, is not to claim that it is not real. Evil is a real lack in good things, as the blind person knows only so well. As Thomas put it, "Evil cannot exist but in good; sheer evil is impossible."[7] So, evil is not a real substance, but it is a real privation in a good substance. It is not an actual entity (thing), but it is a real corruption in an actual entity.

Different Kinds of Privations

Evil as privation comes in different kinds. There are physical privations, such as mutilations and there are moral privations, such as a sexual perversity. Privation can be in substance (what something is) or in relationships (how it relates to others). There are not only bad things but there are bad relations between things. A relationship of love is a good one;

hate is an evil one. Likewise, when a creature worships its Creator, this is a good relationship, but blaspheming the Creator is an evil relationship.

Given that evil is a privation or corruption of a good thing, it follows that there is no such thing as something that is totally evil. If it were totally deprived of all good, it would be nothing. But total privation in a metaphysical sense is impossible. For as "Aristotle observes that a wholly evil thing would be self-destructive."[8] And a totally incapacitated will could not make any moral actions. So, one must take care not to carry human depravity so far that one destroys the ability to sin. There cannot be a supreme evil, for although evil lessens good, it can never totally destroy it entirely. Nothing can be complete, unmitigated evil. For if all good were entirely destroyed—and this would be required for evil to be complete—evil itself would vanish since its subject, namely good, would no longer be there.

The fact that evil cannot be total in a metaphysical sense by no means implies that it cannot be total evil in a moral sense. A being can be totally depraved morally in the sense that evil has invaded every part of his being and made him incapable of attaining his own salvation. But this moral total depravity can only be extensive, not intensive. It can extend to every part of a person's being, but it cannot destroy the person's being. If it destroyed one's personhood, there would no longer be a morally responsible person there to do evil.

The Four Causes of Evil

Following Aristotle, Aquinas described things in terms of their four causes: (1) efficient (that by which); (2) final (that for which); (3) formal (that of which), and (4) material (that out of which). When applied to evil, Aquinas held "That good is the material cause of evil has already appeared. As regards the formal cause, evil had none; instead it is rather the privation of form. Similarly, it had no final cause, but is rather the privation of due order to the proper end. . . . Evil has an efficient cause; this, however, is indirect, not direct."[9] As we will see (below) the direct and immediate cause of evil is free will. For Aquinas concluded, "the action pertaining to the sin is from God, but the sin is not from God."[10]

The Origin of Evil

For a theist like Aquinas, the origin of evil is a difficult problem. An absolutely good God cannot create evil. Nor, it would appear, can a perfect creature give rise to evil which is an imperfection. How, then, did evil arise? There are two possibilities: (1) Evil could be eternal; (2) Evil arose from good.

Evil is not Eternal

Aquinas concluded that "There is no justification for holding that there are two [eternal] kingdoms, one of good, the other of evil."[11] He insisted that "There is not one first principle of evil as there is of good." He offers several reasons. "In the first place, the original principle of things is essentially good. Nothing can be essentially bad. Every being as being is good; evil does not exist except in a good subject."[12] "In the second place, the first principle of good things is supreme and perfect good containing all goodness in itself. Now there cannot be a supreme evil, for though evil lessens good, it can never totally destroy good. . . . " For this reason Aristotle observes that a wholly evil thing would be self-destructive."[13] "In the third place, the very notion of evil is irreconcilable with the notion of a first principle, because evil is caused by good; also because evil can be a cause only incidentally, and therefore cannot be the first cause, since the accidental is subsequent to the essential."[14] Further, "There cannot be an evil entirely apart from good, for it has been proved that evil resides in some good. Therefore, nothing is supremely evil."[15] At this point Aquinas would agree with Augustine that good is basic to evil since if we take all the evil away from something, then it is something better. But if we take all the good away from evil, there is nothing left.[16]

Evil Arises from Good (God) Incidentally

But if evil is not an essential and eternal principle, then it must have arisen from good. But how? Aquinas argues that since evil cannot be caused “by an evil, since evil does not act save by virtue of as good. . . , it follows that good itself is the primary cause of evil." For "that which is not, is not the cause of anything. Hence, if evil be caused by something, this must be a good."[17]

The problem can be put this way: (1) God is absolutely perfect; (2) God cannot create anything imperfect: (3) But perfect creatures cannot do evil; (4) Therefore, neither God nor his perfect creatures can produce evil;

(5) But evil has occurred; (6) Hence, either (a) God is not absolutely perfect, or (b) He did not create a perfect creature.

Following St. Augustine, Aquinas challenged the premise number (3). God is good, and He created good creatures with a good power called free will. But unfortunately they used this good power to bring evil into the universe by rebelling against their Creator. So evil did arise from good, not directly but indirectly, by the abuse of a good power called freedom. Freedom in itself is not evil. It is good to be free. But with freedom comes the possibility of evil.

So God is responsible for making evil *possible* (by creating a good power called free will), but free creatures are responsible for making it *actual*. God is the primary cause of all actions (including those that fall short of being totally good, namely, evil actions). But simply because "when something moves itself, it is not precluded that it is moved by another from whom it has this very ability by which it moves itself. And therefore it is not contrary to liberty that God is the cause of the act of free will."[18]

God is the Primary Cause of Free Will which is the Secondary Cause of Evil

Hence, Aquinas distinguished between the Primary Cause of a free action (God) and the secondary cause (a free creature). God gave the power of choice to some creatures. However, God is not responsible for the exercise of that free choice to do evil. God does not perform the free acts for us. Human free choice is not a mere instrumental cause through which God works. Human beings are the efficient, albeit secondary, causes of their own free actions. Thus Aquinas adds, "And for this reason we maintain that the action [power] pertaining to the sin is from God, but the sin is not from God."[19]

The Nature of Free Will

Aquinas outlines several aspects of what he calls free choice in human beings. The first of these is that free choices are voluntary.

Free choice is voluntary. According to Aquinas, free will involves a voluntary act. For "there must needs be something voluntary in human acts."[20] This is so "since man especially knows the end of his work, and moves himself, in his acts especially is the voluntary to be found."[21]

Human Free will has the power of alternate choice. Further, the will has the power of choice "because its power is not limited to one effect; indeed the will has the power to produce this or that effect, and consequently is undetermined to either."[22]

A free choice is a self-caused action. In response to the question "Whether the will moves itself?" Aquinas answers that "It belongs to the will to move the other powers, by reason of the end which is the will's object." So, "the will, through its volition of the end, moves itself to will the means."[23] Thus, free choice is not determined by another, or undetermined, but it is as self-determinism action. If it were caused by another, then they would be responsible for it. And it is irrational to assume there was no cause of it. Actions and events do not occur without a cause. Therefore, every free choice must be self-caused, that is, caused by the self (person**).**

Free choice is not of necessity. Thomas states clearly that "Man does not choose of necessity." He affirms that "the reason for this is found in the very power of reason. For the will can tend to do whatever the reason apprehends as good. Now the reason can apprehend as good not only this, viz, to will or to act, but also this, viz., not to will and not to act." Also, "the reason can consider the nature of some good, and the lack of some good, which has the nature of an evil. "Hence, "since choice is not of the end, but of the means. . . , it is not of the perfect good, which is happiness, but of other and particular goods. Therefore, man chooses, not of necessity, but freely."[24]

Free choice cannot be coerced. Another characteristic of free choice is that it cannot be forced. Violence is contrary to free choice. Thus, irresistible persuasion is also a contradiction in terms. It is just a euphemistic way of saying "forced freedom" which is contradictory. C. S. Lewis agreed, saying, "But you now see that the Irresistible and the Indisputable are the two weapons which the nature of His scheme forbids Him to use. Merely to over-ride a human will . . . would be for Him useless. He cannot ravish. He can only woo."[25] Or as he stated elsewhere, "When one says, 'All will be saved,' my reason retorts, 'Without their will, or with it?' If I say, 'Without their will,' I at once perceive a contradiction; how can the supreme voluntary act of self-surrender be involuntary? If I say, 'With their will,' my reason replies, 'How, if they will not give in?'."[26]

Even though God (as Primary Cause) gives us both the power to choose and is involved in the very action of choosing,[27] nonetheless, "The will [secondary cause] contributes something when it is moved by God. And therefore although the movement of the will is from outside as from a first principle, nevertheless it is not coerced."[28] For God moves creatures in accordance with their nature, and man is by nature a free being. "Therefore, if God moves man's will, this is evidently not opposed to freedom of choice, just as God's activity in natural things is not contrary to their nature."[29]

Aquinas noted that "some philosophers maintain that man's will is necessarily moved to choose a thing . . . , But that opinion is heretical, for it destroys the reason for merit and demerit in human acts: for it does not seem to be meritorious or demeritorious for someone of necessity to do what he cannot avoid."[30] He adds, unless "it is within our power" to choose and not of necessity, "then praise and blame . . . are nullified."[31]

Free choice is not destroyed by sin. As for Augustine's statement that "the man who misuses free will destroys both himself and it,"[32] Aquinas replies, "the sinner has lost free will so far as concerns freedom from fault and misery, but not so far as concerns freedom from compulsion."[33]

In summation, a person (a free agent) is the cause of evil. This free will, even after the Fall of Adam, is voluntary, not of necessity, and free from compulsion. Indeed, even though our wills are moved by God (the Primary Cause), nonetheless, we are not coerced to do anything contrary to our wills.

The Purpose of Evil

According to Aquinas, since God is all-knowing, all-wise and all-good, then He must have a good purpose for everything. Since He foreknew evil would occur, this would mean that God had a good purpose for permitting it. He wrote: "God's permission of evil in the things governed by Him is not inconsistent with the divine goodness."[34]

God's has a Good Purpose for Permitting Evil

No evil is good, but God has a good purpose for permitting evil. "Every agent acts for an end clearly follows from the fact that every agent tends toward something definite. Now that to which an agent tends definitely must be befitting to it. . . . But that which is befitting to a thing is

good for it. Therefore every agent acts for a good."[35] And since God the ultimate Good is also the ultimate agent, it follows that God must have an ultimate good purpose for which He is permitting evil.

Further, we have the assurance that evil can never completely destroy the good. For "however much evil be increased it can never destroy good entirely, since there must always remain the subject of evil, as long as evil remains. Now the subject of evil is good. Therefore, some good must always remain."[36]

God Will Bring Good Out of Evil

Further, "God governs things by his providence." And "whatever makes a thing for the sake of an end makes use of it for the end." So, "whatever has being in any as is an effect of God, and . . . God makes all things for an end which is Himself. Therefore, He uses everything by directing to its end. But this is to govern. Therefore God by His providence, is the governor of all."[37] This means that evil, which exists in the good, is permitted by God and evil directed by God to His good ends. So, God is so powerful that He can make good even out of evil an evil situation.

Permitting Evil is a Precondition for Achieving Higher Goods.

Aquinas affirmed that "Many good things would be missed if God permitted no evil to exist: fire would not burn unless air was consumed, lions would not thrive unless asses were killed, nor would just retribution be inflicted and long-suffering patience praised but for the iniquity of persecution."[38] In short, no pain, no gain. If sin is not permitted, it cannot be defeated. If danger is not allowed, courage cannot be achieved. Without tribulation patience cannot be attained. First order evils are a necessary condition for achieving second order goods.

God's Providence and the Persistence of Evil

God permits evil, but He controls it by His providence. Aquinas said that "It belongs to the divine providence, not to destroy, but to preserve the nature of things."[39] God can do this, even though humans have the free choice to do evil. He can accomplish this because God (the Primary Cause) in His providence "moves all things in accordance with their conditions, in such a way that from necessary causes, through their divine motion, effects follow of necessity, but from contingent causes [like free choice] effect flow contingently."[40] So, in either case God's providence is not hindered.

No evil is sought for the evil in it, but for the good. For "No evil can be desirable, either by natural appetite or by conscious will. It is sought indirectly, namely because it is the consequence of some good. . . . A lion kills for food that means the death of the deer: a fornicator wants pleasure, and incurs the deformity of sin."[41]

The Ultimate Good (*God*) *is the Ultimate End*

The ultimate good toward which creatures are directed is God. "For as nothing tends to something as its end, except in so far as this s good, it follows that good, as such, is an end. Consequently that which is supremely good is supremely the end of all. Now there is but one supreme good, namely God. . . . Therefore, all things are directed to the highest good, namely, God as their end."[42]

Further, "since the supreme agent is the active principle of the actions of all inferior agents, by moving all their actions, and consequently to their ends. Hence it follows that all the ends of second agents are ordered by the first agent to its own end. . . . Therefore, all things are ordered to God as their end."[43]

This is not the Best World Possible

As for the question of why God did not create a better world than this one, Aquinas rejects Augustine's view that: "Nothing else but real beings and real natures conspire to the perfection of the universe. Now evil is part of the perfection of the universe. As Augustine says, the admirable beauty of the world is composed of everything; even what is called evil, well ordered and in its place, accentuates the goodness of things."[44] To this Aquinas replies, "Evil as such does not belong to the perfection of the universe, save accidentally, that is by reason of its incidental conjunction with good."[45]

Augustine had argued that the evil accents the good the way dark places in a painting accent the light ones. Or, like a mosaic, when one looks at only one jagged piece, it does not look good. But in of the overall mosaic it is part of a total picture of beauty. But Aquinas rejects this view, arguing that evil is evil, and evil does not contribute to the overall good of the universe. Rather, as shown above (under "The Purpose of Evil"), God has a good purpose for allowing evil, namely, to achieve the greater good. But evil itself is not part of an overall good.

The Problem of Physical Evil

The above solution to the problem of moral evil does not appear to solve the problem of natural disasters. It does not suffice to say that the free will of creatures caused all these. How, then, can natural evil be explained? How can God, a perfect Cause, produce these natural evils?

In response to physical evil, Aquinas notes that "we may speak of evil in both senses: that is, by reason of a defect in the things itself (thus blindness is a certain evil in an animal), and by reason of a defect in a creature's action (thus lameness connotes action with a defect. Evil is an action that is directed to an end in such a way that it is not rightly related to the end, is called fault (*peccatum*) both in voluntary agents and in natural agents. "For example, "A physician is faulty (*peccat*) in his action, when he does not proceed in such a way as to procure health. Nature, too, is faulty in its activity when it fails to advance a generated being to its proper disposition and form; this is why monsters occur in nature."[46]

Physical Evil is not the Result of an Imperfect Cause

Aquinas contended that an absolutely perfect Cause cannot be blamed for physical evil. He wrote: "We have shown that in God there is no defect, but consummate perfection. Hence the evil which lies in defective activity or which is caused by a defective agent does not flow from God as its cause. And this appears in respect both to natural and to voluntary things."[47] That is, the defect must be either in the secondary causes (not in God, the Primary Cause) or connect with the material world in which the causality activity is operating.

Of course, "the effect of a deficient secondary cause is derived from a non-deficient first cause with respect to what is real and complete there, not to what is defective. For example, all the motion in the act of limping comes from a person's vitality, but not the ungainliness comes from the crooked leg. Likewise, all that [is] real and active in a bad action comes from God as its cause, yet the defect there arises from a deficient secondary cause."[48] It is in this sense that God is said to be not only the cause of the power of free will but also of the actions of free will.[49] He is not the cause of the evil in those actions but of the actuality in the actions.

However, "the course of justice, which belongs to the universal order, requires that punishment be visited on sinners. On this count God is the author of the evil which is called penalty, but not of that which is fault. . . ."[50] For punishing evil (which God does) is a good action.

Physical Evils Due to the Nature of the Physical World

While God is a perfect cause, the material on which He is producing the effect is not perfect. So, "considering the exigencies of the material from which he is made, death and disease are natural to man; but considering his form, immortality is his right, though the principles of nature alone are not sufficient to ensure this: the appetite is inherent, but the achievement is a gift."[51] Even though God is a perfect Cause, evil can occur in two ways in the physical world. For "the incidence of evil is on both; on the former by a withdrawal of form or on an integral part, thus blindness or the lack of a limb; on the latter by a gap in the proper activity, either by non-performance or failure in execution of direction."[52] Both account for physical evil in the world. The evil can be in the action of the cause or in the effect. "In the action evil is caused by defect of motive power, as in babies. On the other hand, evil is cause in the effect sometimes by the very energy of the agent—not, however, in the proper effect of the agent—and sometimes by the intractability of the matter."[53] For example, "when the privation of one form introduces by the agent, as when fire expels the form of air or water the more energetic the agent the forcibly it impresses itself and destroys the contrary."[54]

God Causes Physical Evil only Incidentally ,not Directly

Sometimes physical evil is the incidental result of a good causal process. "Destruction comes then from the very strength of the flames; even so the energy is directly bent on mastering, not on destroying, though in effect it is incidentally destructive." So, "the fact that a thing is deficient is incidental to the goodness by which it is active. Hence, it is true to say that evil had naught but an incidental cause; in this sense good is the cause of evil."[55] Thus, when Aquinas says "God is the author of physical evil but not of moral evil . . ,” we must understand that God does not cause evil directly

but only indirectly or incidentally.[56] "The form principally intended by God among created things is the well-being of the general scheme, which requires that some can and will fail. And so in causing a good collective arrangement, God consequently, and as it were indirectly, causes the corruption of things."[57] This is how Aquinas understands biblical texts like Deuteronmy 32:39: "See now that I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive." Exodus 4:11 would fall into this same category: "Who had made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"

God and Gratuitous Evil

From this last point, it seems clear that so-called gratuitous evil would not be against divine providence. Gratuitous evil is evil for which there is no justification or purpose as such. Gratuitous evil is unwarranted evil. It does not result directly from any justifiable divine intention. In a theistic context, it is the kind of evil which, as such, is inconsistent with an all-loving, all-good, and all-powerful God.

Now it would seem that Aquinas' concept of incidental evil fits into this concept. It is unwarranted as such but is explicable only in terms of a general good intended by good of which it is a byproduct. Hence, God did not intend it as such. Rather, it was necessary byproduct of a good process God did intend. It is inconsistent as such to the character and purpose of God. There was a particular plan for its existence. Rather, it was just a kind of collateral damage that came along with the war on evil. Gratuitous evil actions merely accompany the overall package of good that God has provided for mankind. Hence, God is not the direct cause of it. He is related to it only incidentally and indirectly. In such a world, then, we can expect good and bad fortune within the overall providence of God.

The Relation of God Providence to Fortune and Chance

According to Thomas, "It is evident from what has been said that the divine providence does not remove from the world fortune and chance. Fortune and chance are said of things that happen seldom. . . . Now it would be against the nature of divine providence if all things happened of necessity. . . . Therefore it would also be against the nature of divine providence if nothing happened in the world fortuitously and by chance."[58] Further, "chance occurrences are due to concurrence of two or more causes,

when some end which was not intended happens from the concurrence of some cause. . . . Therefore it is not against divine providence that there be fortuitous and chance happenings in the world."[59]

Of course, "An occurrence may be accidental or fortuitous with respect to a lower cause when an effect not intended is brought about, and yet not be accidental or fortuitous with respect to a higher cause. . . . For example, a master may send two servants to the same place, but in such a way that neither is aware of the mission of the other. Their meeting is accidental so far as each of them is concerned, but not as regards the master." So, "if God's point of view is concerned they are not fortuitous, but foreseen."[60]

The Relation of God's Providence to Fate

Aquinas acknowledged that "Many effects are found to occur haphazardly if they are regarded from the standpoint of secondary causes. Some thinkers are unwilling to refer such effects to a high cause that ordains them." But he adds, "Since, however, not only natural things but also human affairs are under divine providence, those events that seem to happen at random in men's lives must be referred to the ordination of divine providence." In this sense, "those who hold that all things are subject to divine providence, must admit the existence of fate."

However, since the term is often used by unbelievers in a fatalistic sense of events devoid of any involvement of our free choice, we should avoid the word "fate" at least "so far as possible, lest an occasion for going astray be taken by those who do not understand. . . ." Therefore, "Augustine says that if anyone believes in the existence of fate in the second sense [of divine providence], he may keep to his opinion but should correct his language."[61]

The Ultimate Victory of Good over Evil

Eventually evil will be defeated. For the destructive force of evil are limited and temporal. In the end evil will be punished—forever, and good will be rewarded for all eternity.

The Destructive Affects of Evil are not Total or Permanent

Thomas contended that "However greatly multiplied, evils can never consume the whole of good."[62] "But even were the contrary

dispositions [of evil] piled up indefinitely [against the soul], the aptness for right action would be indefinitely weakened, not wholly destroyed. The root always remains, namely the substance of the subject."[63] So, "the capital of human nature diminished by sin is the natural inclination to virtue instinctive in man as a rational being; to act aright is to act according to reason. Now sin cannot destroy man's rationality altogether, for then he would no longer be capable of sin."[64] For "sin does not strike at the root, since it does not diminish nature itself; what it does is to block the ability from reaching its end; the disability consists in the interposition of a barrier. . . . Yet the instinct for right action always remains radically intact."[65]

At this point the critic could always ask why a physical world is necessary. Why did not God make spirits, who could not hurt their bodies or die? The answer is: God did; they are called angels. The problem is that, while no angel can die of food poisoning, neither can they enjoy a prime rib. While no angel has ever drowned, neither has any angel ever gone for a swim or enjoyed water skiing. No angel has ever been raped, but neither has any angel ever enjoyed sex or the blessing of having children (Matt. 22:30). In this kind of physical world, we simply must take the concomitant evil along with the good.

What is more, angels for Aquinas are unchangeable in their created nature (except by annihilation). Hence, they cannot be redeemed once they fall. However, human beings, who can change, are therefore redeemable. As the angelic doctor put it (citing Damascene), "Death is to men what the fall is to angles." That is to say, "it is clear that the mortal sins of men, grave or less grave, are pardonable before death; whereas after death they are without remission, and forever."[66] Why can't angels have more time to change their minds? First of all, angels are not in time, so, they have no time to change.[3] Second, because angels, unlike men, cannot change by their nature. So, "the angel's will adheres fixedly and immovably."[67] Hence, their choice against God was fixed from it very inception of the choice.

The Eternal Blessedness of Saints in Heaven

Eventually, God will redeem us from all physical evil too, giving us immortal and incorruptible bodies. Further, it will provide a beatific vision for all believers who, once they see the very essence of God, will never be able to sin again. For as Aquinas declared, "the intellect that sees God cannot but rejoice in the vision of Him. Besides, God is goodness itself, and

goodness is the cause of love. Hence goodness must necessarily be loved by all who apprehend it."[68] This will signal the ultimate defeat of evil. But such an experience is provided only for those who willingly submit to God. No one is coerced against their will (see discussion on free will above). However, like falling in love gradually and freely we will ultimately reach a point of no return. So, in heaven we will be so overwhelmed by the Blessed vision of an Absolute Good (God) that we will no longer be able to sin. In short, we will experience the ultimate freedom like God has—the freedom *from* sin. We will no longer have the lesser kind of freedom which is the freedom **to** sin which we have here below.

The Eternal Punishment of Sinners in Hell

God loves all and wants to save all. However, He knew there would be casualties. He knew His grace of salvation would not be accepted by all. Hence, for the reprobate God's Justice must be satisfied. Thus, "The suffering of eternal punishment is in no way opposed to divine justice," wrote Aquinas.[69] To the criticism that eternal punishment for temporal sins is overkill, Aquinas responded: "For the crime of adultery or murder, either of which may be committed in a brief span of time, human law may prescribe life-long exile or even death, by both of which the criminal is banned forever from the society of the State."[70] And "clearly, the greater the person, the more grievous is the offense. He who strikes a soldier is held more accountable that if he strikes a peasant; and his offense is much more serious if he strikes a prince or a king. Accordingly, since God is infinitely great, an offense committed against Him is in a certain respect infinite; and so a punishment that is in a certain respect infinite is duly attached."[71] As long as there is an eternal Just God, there must be eternal justice. Sin cannot be defeated forever unless the sinner is banished forever.

A Brief Summary of Aquinas's View on Evil

First of all, Aquinas rejected Augustine's best of all possible worlds hypothesis which was later adopted by Leibniz. When one thinks of all the horrible evils in the world, he would have agreed with Voltaire's satire of the Augustinian-Leibnizian thesis that this is the best of all possible worlds. The horrid evils of child torture, rape, and the holocaust are not transformed from evil to good simply by making them part of a broader picture!

Second, Aquinas view on the nature of free will and its relation to God's providential governance of the world in instructive. His insight on the relation of Primary and secondary causality is key to this. Indeed, even some Calvinistic authorities have made use of it. *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, for example, affirms that: "God hath endued the will of man with that *natural liberty, that is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil*" (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chap. 9, emphasis added). "Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out according to the nature of *second causes*, either necessarily**,** *freely*, or contingently" (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chap. 5, emphasis added).

Third, another point worth mentioning is Aquinas's stress on some of natural evil as a byproduct of a good purpose or process. This fits well with the contemporary understanding of some of the processes of nature as, for example, earth quakes being necessary to renew the minerals on earth to sustain life. Further, tornados are a spinoff of good things like hot air, cold air and moisture. Also, lightening that kills people also puts liquid fertilizer into the soil, and so on.

Fourth, Aquinas's view of incidental and fortuitous evil is helpful in answering what is a pressing aspect of the problem of evil. It preserves the overall providence of God while it relieves the apologist of the need to explain what appears to be obvious examples of gratuitous evil in the world.

Select Works on Aquinas and Evil

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AQUINAS'S VIEW ON LAW AND MORALITY stands between two extremes. On the one hand, theonomists reduce all law to divine law, insisting that human governments should be based on biblical law. On the other hand, situationists insist that there are no moral absolutes, reducing all law to human law. So, the questions before us are these: What is the relation of divine law and human law? Are there any natural moral laws common to all people but not unique to any one of the many claimants to divine revelation? To these and related questions, Aquinas offers an amazingly contemporary and relevant answer.

The Nature of Law

THE DEFINITION OF LAW

For Aquinas "law is a defined measure or rule by which we are led to act or withheld from acting."[1] It is "an ordinance of reason made for the common good by the public personage who has charge of the community, and [is] promulgated."[2] Thus, law is the basic rule or principle by which actions of persons are directed. Law is a first principle for action. For "the rule and measure of human activity is the reason, the first principle of human activity, whose function is to direct means to ends."[3]

LAW AS A FIRST PRINCIPLE

Each area of human activity has its own first principles. As we have already seen (see Chap. 6), there are first principles of human thinking, such as the law of non-contradiction. Likewise, there are first principles of human acting, such as moral laws. "The precepts of the natural law are to the practical reason what first principles of science are to the theoretical reason." For "reason is the first principle of human acts." It should be noted that they are not first principles of the theoretical reason but of practical reason. That is, they are operative not in speculative matters but in practical matters. Hence, "the first principle of the practical reason is our ultimate end, or happiness; law is chiefly concerned with planning for this."[4] In brief, law is the rule directed toward the common good (happiness).

THE PROMULGATION OF LAW

In order for a law to be in effect, it must be promulgated. For "no one is obliged to obey a precept unless he be reasonably informed about it."[5] This follows logically from the nature of law as a duty of action for the common good. Thus, "to lay an obligation a law must be applied to the men who have to be regulated, and this means that it must be brought to their knowledge by promulgation."[6] In this sense ignorance of the law is a legitimate excuse not to obey it. But since "man does not make the law for himself, but through the act of his knowledge, by which he knows a law made by someone else, he is bound to fulfill the law."[7] Aquinas illustrates this point as follows:

If a mistaken reason bids a man sleep with another man's wife, to do this will be evil if based on ignorance of a divine law he ought to know; but if the misjudgment is occasioned by thinking that the woman is really his own wife, and she wants him and he wants her, then his will is free from guilt.[8]

In summation, law by nature is a measure for conduct. It is a first principle of human action. But in order to be in effect, the law must be proclaimed. Once proclaimed, a law is binding.

Kinds of Law

ETERNAL LAW

Eternal law is "the idea existing in God as the principle of the universe and lying behind the governance of things."[9] It is the source and exemplar of all other law. For "all laws derive from the eternal law to the extent that they share in right reason." It is eternal "because naught in the divine reason is conceived in time, for the plan was set up from eternity."[10] So eternal law is the divine reason by which the universe is ruled. "All things subject to divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law, and consequently it is clear that somehow they share in the eternal law, for under it they have their propensities to their appropriate activities and ends."[11] It is the eternal mind of God as it conceived and determined all that would be and how it would be run. From it flow all other kinds of law, whether natural, human, or divine.

NATURAL LAW

Natural law is a derivative of eternal law. In fact, "natural right is contained in the eternal law primarily, and in the natural judicial faculty of human reason secondarily."[12] Natural law, then, is the human participation

in eternal law by way of reason. In brief, natural law is "the natural light of reason, by which we discern what is right and wrong." It is "naught else but the impression on us of divine light."[13] All rational creatures share in natural law. It is the law written on their hearts (Rom. 2:15).

Natural law teaches us to do good and shun evil. But "good and evil should be set in the context of what is proper to man as man. This is his rational life."[14] So a good act is one in accordance with human (rational) nature while an evil act is one contrary to reason. According to Aquinas, the sad fact is that "most men seem to live according to sense rather than reason.[15]

To live according to human nature, however, does not mean that human nature is the ultimate measure of all things. For "in voluntary activity the proximate measure is the human reason, the supreme measure the eternal law." In other words, "the measure of human willing is double: one close and of the same nature, namely the human reason itself; the other, first and transcendent, namely the eternal law which is like the reason of God."[16] Thus, "when a human act goes to its end in harmony with the order of reason and eternal law then the act is right; when it turns away from that rightness it is termed sin."[17] Human reason is the basis for natural law only insofar as it participates in the Eternal Reason. Hence, in this sense "to disparage the dictate of reason is equivalent to condemning the command of God."[18]

HUMAN LAW

Human law, also called positive law, is the attempt of human reason to make practical laws based on natural law. Human law is a particularization of the general principles of natural law.

Human law may be inferred from natural law in two ways. "Some precepts are inferred from the natural law as a conclusion, thus *thou shalt not kill* comes from *thou shalt not harm."* Others, however, "relate to the natural law as determinate embodiments; for though it may be declared that criminals should be punished, the natural law does not settle the character of the punishment." In short, human law may be derived from natural law "either as a conclusion or as a particular application."[19] According to Aquinas, the first is like a demonstrative science and the second like an art. Hence, "laws that are declared as conclusions have their force from the

natural law as well as from enactment. But laws that are decreed as applied decisions have their force from human legislation."

Not everything forbidden by human law is essentially evil. For "some things are commanded because they are good, or forbidden because they are evil. Others again are good because they are commanded, or evil because forbidden."[20] Of course, "a human act that is faulty and a sinful kind of act is wrong under all circumstances whatsoever. An act of vice, forbidden by a negative precept, is never to be committed by anyone." However, "in an act of virtue, which is commanded by an affirmative precept, many factors have to conspire to make it right. . . . [Thus, it] need not be complied with persistently and in every case, but only when the due conditions of person, time, place, and situation demand its observance."[21]

Human law is imposed on imperfect people. "Therefore it does not forbid all vices, from which the virtuous keep themselves, but only the graver ones which the majority can avoid, and chiefly those that are damaging to others and on prevention of which depends social stability."[22] That is, "human law cannot forbid all and everything that is against virtue; it is enough that it forbid deeds against community life; the remainder it tolerates almost as if they were licit, not indeed because they are approved, but because they are not punished."[23] In short, "every act of virtue is not commanded by human law, but only those that can be enjoined for the public good."[24] For "the immediate end of human law is men's own utility."[25]

Of course, not every human law is legitimate. For "every law is ordered for the common good, and a precept has the force of law only when it serves this community benefit."[26] Laws contrary to the common good (which is demanded by the natural law) do not have the force of law. Likewise, laws that are not promulgated, even if they are directed to the common good, are not binding.

DIVINE LAW

Divine law has a different purpose than natural law. "The intent of the divine law given to man is to lead him to God." That is, "the entire purpose of the lawgiver is that man may love God."[27] Divine law, therefore, is not given to unbelievers but to believers. Natural law is for unbelievers. Divine law is binding on the church, while natural law is binding on all

society. Natural law is directed toward our temporal good, but divine law is directed toward our eternal good.

Inasmuch as natural law reflects the very character of God, it cannot change. Divine law, however, is based on God's will and therefore can be changed. Hence, "in divine as in human law, some things are commanded because they are good. . . . Others again are good because they are commanded."[28] This is reflected in God's change in divine law from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The natural law, however, has not been altered; it remains the same from age to age and from person to person.

The Purpose of Law

In general, the purpose of law is to regulate human activity. Each kind of law, of course, has its own specific kind of regulation. Eternal law is the means by which God regulates the entire universe; divine law is that by which he regulates the church; and natural law is the means of regulating the actions of all rational creatures. In addition to these spheres, Aquinas spells out several specific dimensions of God's purpose for giving law.

Promoting Friendship

One of the purposes of law is to promote friendship. "As the leading purpose of human law is to bring about friendship of men among themselves, so divine law is chiefly intended to establish men in friendship with God."[29] If human behavior is to be civil, it must be regulated. Apart from laws friendship cannot function, since it is the measure of right relationships.

Stimulating Love of God

Jesus summarized the law as love of God and love of others. Aquinas, then, notes that "the entire purpose of the lawgiver is that man may love God." Hence, it is not either law or love; rather, it is the law of love. Thus "the intent of divine law given to man is to lead him to God." For "love is our strongest union with God, and this above all is intended by the divine law."[30] God is love, and the highest duty is to love him. Thus the primary purpose of God's law is that we may love him.

Punishing Evil

Of course, Aquinas realizes that not everyone will obey God's laws. Hence, a secondary purpose in giving law is punishment. But even here "the

value of human penalties is medicinal and insofar as they promote public security of the cure of the criminal."[31] This is also true of divine and natural law. The primary purpose is for our good, but the secondary purpose is to penalize those who disobey. But the hope is that even the punishment will help cure the violator.

Achieving the Common Good

Human law also has the purpose of achieving the common good. Aquinas recognizes that "to make a rule fit every case is impossible." Hence, "legislators have to attend to what happens in the majority of cases and should frame their laws accordingly." For example, "the law commands that deposits [things borrowed] should be returned, but this, though just in most cases, may sometimes be damaging, as when a weapon is returned to a raging maniac."[32] So what is productive of the common good is not always right in a specific case. Since law makers cannot take every specific exception into consideration, they must base their law on what happens in the majority of cases. For example, a biologist says a human hand has four fingers and a thumb, realizing that in some cases persons have fewer or more.[33]

Conflicting Situations

Aquinas is aware of the fact that there are conflicts among laws. But even in unavoidable conflicts he sees a priority among the conflicting laws that could resolve the problem.

The Priority of Natural Law over Human Law

Aquinas believes there are exceptions even to just human laws. Human laws are only general, not universal. Hence, at times the natural law overrides them. As just noted, even though the law of property rights demands that we return what we have borrowed when requested, nonetheless we should not return a weapon to a person who is in a murderous rage. In such a case, "to follow the law as it stands would be wrong; to leave it aside and follow what is demanded by fairness and the common benefit will then be right."[34] The virtue of justice or equity demands this. In other words, the moral law takes precedence over the human law in these special cases, even if the human law is a just law.

Laws Based on God's Nature over His Will

Aquinas distinguishes between laws based on the nature of God and those flowing only from God's will. The latter can be changed while the former cannot.[35] Both divine law and human law, based on God's will, can be changed. The natural law, however, is based on God's nature and cannot be changed.[36] Hence, it would follow that whenever there is a conflict between unchangeable law and changeable law, the former would take priority over the latter. Such seems to be what Aquinas has in view when commenting on the fact that Jesus' disciples broke the Jewish law. For "when the disciples picked ears of corn on the Sabbath they were excused from breaking the law by necessity of hunger. Nor did David transgress the law when he took the loaves it was illegal for him to eat."[37]

The Letter versus the Spirit of the Law

How Aquinas would resolve conflicting moral situations also emerges in his treatment of "letter of the law" issues. He observes that "the judgment that the letter of the law is not to be followed in certain given circumstances is not a criticism of the law, but an appreciation of a particular situation that has cropped up."[38] Otherwise severity would take priority over equity. For "legal-mindedness should be directed by equity, which provides a higher rule for human activity."[39] There is a "higher rule" or law and there are lower laws. When they conflict, we are obligated to take the higher over the lower.

Morality

According to Aquinas, there are four "cardinal" or reasonable virtues (prudence, courage, temperance, justice) and three divine virtues (faith, hope, love). The reasonable virtues are common to all rational creatures, and are naturally attainable. The divine virtues, however, are supernatural and received only by God's grace.

The Cardinal Virtues

There are four cardinal virtues. By "cardinal" Aquinas means others hinge (Lat. *cardo)* on them. Not that these are the only virtues, but they are the pivotal ones. Of these Aquinas believes that "prudence opens the way for the other virtues."[40]

Prudence (*Wisdom*)

"Prudence furnishes the right plan for immediate conduct."[41] It is both thoughtful and practical. It is good sense applied to conduct.[42]

Prudence chooses the best means to the good end.[43] Since prudence applies principles to particular cases, it does not establish moral purposes, "but contrives the means thereto."[44] Prudence does not establish a moral end but presupposes it. "That we should live according to right reason is presupposed to prudence. But how, and through what means, our conduct may keep the reasonable measure, that is the affair of prudence. Prudence does not determine our moral duty (the natural law does that), but it devises a plan of conduct to attain it. Since prudence also induces the right frame of mind, it is an intellectual virtue as well as a moral one."[45]

There are three kinds of prudence: "solitary prudence directed to one's own benefit; economic or domestic prudence directed to the good of a household or family; and political prudence ordered to the common good of the State."[46] Three stages are marked in prudent conduct. First, we take counsel and discuss the question. Next, we make a judgment about the matter as to the best course of action. Finally, we apply the counsel and judgment to what must be done here and now.[47] Since "an infinity of singulars cannot be comprehended by the human reason," prudence does not deal with universals but with "what usually happens."[48] There is no absolute certainty with prudence. "Opinion [probability] is about things that could be otherwise, and so is prudence."[49] Wisdom, then, deals only with what is generally the case; it does not admit of universals. Only the natural law does that.

Courage

Courage is the virtue of "holding steady in the face of danger."[50] It includes patience.[51] Courage is both a general and a special virtue. As a general virtue, courage is "a firmness of spirit, or a condition of every virtue." As a special virtue, courage is "a particular firmness in enduring and repulsing threats n situations fraught with conspicuous difficulty."[52] Courage is obtained by drawing close to God. For "the nearer a man is to God, who is ever constant, the more steadfast he is and the less ficlde."[53] In the display of courage two characteristics should be considered: "the premeditated deliberateness and the habit of discipline."[54] It is the latter that manifests itself in emergencies. Courage is not to be confused with aggressiveness. For "holding steady in danger is more important than taking the offensive."[55] Courage, then, is the virtue that enables us to hold fast in the face of danger.

Temperance

Temperance is the virtue of moderation. The virtues of "justice and courage are more immediately related to the common good than temperance is, for justice controls transactions with others, while courage rides the dangers to be undergone for the common good." By contrast, "temperance moderates merely one's own personal lusts and pleasures. Therefore, the others are greater virtues, and prudence and the divine virtues are more potent still. "[56]

The virtue of "temperance does not abolish all depraved lusts, but the temperate man does not tolerate them as does the intemperate man."[57] A temperate person is one who modifies sensual desires by reason. The intemperate person is childish. First, both intemperate persons and children desire graceless things. For "a child does not bother about counsels of moderation . . . ; neither does lust listen to sobriety." Second, both are spoiled when left to their own devices. "Concupiscence grows with gratification." Third, "both require the same remedy, namely, the use of force." Thus, "when lusts are resisted they may be tamed to the due manner of decency."[58]

A temperate person does not avoid all pleasure. For "nature provides pleasure in vitally necessary activities, and the natural order requires that a man should enjoy what is required for the well-being of the individual and the race." In fact, "were someone to avoid pleasure so far as to omit what is a natural necessity he would sin, as though resisting the design of nature." Indeed, "a man cannot lead a reasonable life if he avoids all pleasure. He who abhors pleasures because they are pleasurable is boorish and ungracious."[59]

Justice

Justice is the virtue that "directs our deeds with regard to other people under the aspect of what is owing to them."[60] In other words, "justice stands out as rendering another man his due."[61]

Human "rights are the special object of justice."[62] There are two kinds of rights: natural and positive. The former is a right "from the very nature of things." The other is a right "from agreement, either private or public."[63] Natural rights have priority over positive rights. And "what is

contrary to natural right cannot be made just by human will. Woe to those who make iniquitous laws [Isa. 11:1]."[64]

Aquinas believes there are two main reasons why people fall short of justice—deference to magnates and deference to the mob. Both yield to might over right. In the first case it is a yielding to social power and in the second a yielding to physical power. Each subordinates fairness to force. Both subordinate principles to pressure.

The Divine Virtues

Following the apostle Paul (1 Cor. 13:14), Aquinas believes that the principal Christian virtues are faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love. These actions all take divine grace to perform; hence, they are not natural but divine. They are supernatural virtues since they "surpass human virtue; for they are virtues of men as made partakers in divine grace."[65]

Faith

Faith is prior to hope and love, since "it is by faith that the mind apprehends what it hopes for and loves. And so in the sequence of coming to be, faith has to precede hope and charity." Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not yet seen (Heb. 11:1). Hence, faith is meritorious because it involves the will to believe.

The supernatural virtue of faith does not destroy reason but complements it.[66] Faith goes beyond reason and "sees" what reason cannot see. Thus "faith is the foretaste of that knowledge which hereafter will make us happy."[67] In brief, the virtue of faith is directed toward our eternal happiness.

Hope

Hope is the virtue of expectation. It provides confidence in the content of faith that is perfected by love. "Hope denotes a movement toward that which is not possessed. . . . When, therefore, what is hoped for is possessed, namely the enjoyment of God, hope will no longer be possible."[68] Hope implies four things: "that it is good, future, arduous, possible. Hence, respectively, hope differs from fear, joy, simple desire, and despair."[69]

Like faith, hope precedes love.[70] As we will see, however, love is prior to hope by its very nature. For both faith and hope need love to

complete them.

Hope is the mean between the extremes of presumption and despair. Presumption means hoping to receive from God a good in excess of our condition, or to despair through failing to hope for what we could hope for according to our condition. Yet "there can be no excess of hope in looking to God, for his goodness is infinite."[71] Thus, "the act of hope consists in reliance upon God for future beatitude."[72]

Love

Aquinas believes that "love is the form, mover, and root of the virtues."[73] Unlike the natural virtues, "the object of charity is not the common good, but the highest good."[74] Following the words of Jesus, Aquinas holds that "there are two precepts of charity: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart. . . And the second is like to it: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[75]

Faith and hope cannot be completed without love. Faith draws God to man, but "love draws man to God."[76] Of course, "faith and hope can in a way exist without charity, but they have not the perfect status of a virtue without charity." This is because "the work of God is to believe in God, and . . . to will otherwise than as one ought is not a perfect work of faith." But "to will as one ought is caused by charity, which perfects the will; for every right movement of the will proceeds from a right love, as Augustine says."[77]

As for Augustine's summary of the virtues in terms of love, Aquinas responds: "Augustine's saying is to be understood of virtue in its unqualified sense; not that every such virtue is simply love, but that it depends in some way on love, inasmuch as it depends on the will, the primordial motion of which is love."[78] Love is not the essence of each virtue but the essential motive behind it. Without love, the other virtues are less virtuous.

There are many values in Aquinas's treatment of law and morality from an evangelical perspective. Several may be briefly noted in conclusion. First, unlike many modern thinkers, Aquinas does not reduce all law to human (positive) law. Rather, human law ought to be based on natural law from which it draws its legitimacy. Without an unchangeable anchor for civil law in moral law, human rights cannot be protected.

Second, since natural law is common to all people, not just believers, it can be used as the basis for civil law in religiously pluralistic societies. This avoids the problems of theonomy, wherein divine law is pronounced or practiced as the only legitimate basis for human government. The history of the Christian church gives ample testimony to the fatal consequences of such a view.

Third, since natural law is transnational, it provides a basis for international activity and commerce. Without natural law common to all people, there is no objective basis for the condemnation of tyrants like Hitler and Stalin. For if positive (civil) law is the last word, then each nation can do what is right in its own eyes.

Fourth, by distinguishing between unchangeable laws flowing from God's nature (in natural law) and changeable laws flowing from his will (divine law), we are able to understand the progress of revelation in Scripture whereby God changed the Old Covenant and brought about the New Covenant (Heb. 7). In this way, the extremes of theonomy can be avoided without falling into the pit of antinomianism.

Finally, the distinction between divine law and natural law provides a basis for distinguishing human duty from Christian duty, which is greater. For while the natural law bids us not to harm others, the divine law exhorts us to help them. The natural law demands justice, but the divine law urges love.

Lest my appreciation for Aquinas be misunderstood to mean that I buy into his ideas "lock, stock, and barrel," let it be said that there are many things with which I disagree. In addition to many doctrines that divide Catholics and Protestants (see our *Roman Catholics and Evangelicals: Agreements and Differences*, Baker Books), I disagree with much of the Aristotelian science imbibed by Aquinas, including both the cosmology and biology of the day. I also disagree with his view that the human soul is created many weeks after conception. In point of fact, I suspect that were Aquinas alive today he too would reject much of this too.

There are other things with which I disagree with Aquinas. The same is true of all philosophers and theologians I have ever read in any detail. Indeed, there are things I have written with which I now disagree. That is the way it is with fallible human writers. There is only one Book I read to *believe* (viz., the Bible); all others I read only to *consider.*

There are, however, many important things in which I agree with Aquinas, most of which have been enumerated in the preceding chapters. And there is a very significant sense in which everyone can learn from him. Great thinkers of the past should be not our lords but our guides. When it comes to men like Aquinas, I agree with Bernard of Chartres, who said "we are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants, so as to see more and farther than they do, not as a result of our own sharpness of vision or bodily height, but because we are carried aloft and elevated on their gigantic stature" (cited by M.-D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas.*Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964, p. 68).

Chap. 1: The Contemporary Relevance of Aquinas

1. Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1973), 36; Francis Schaeffer, *The God Who Is There* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1968), 61.

2. Gordon Clark, "Special Divine Revelation as Rational," in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 32.

3. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1955), 73, 94, 127.

4. Cornelius Van Til, *The Great Debate Today* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970), 91.

5. Gordon Clark, *A Christian View of Men and Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 309.

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7. Gordon Clark, “Special Divine Revelation as Rational,” 32.

8. Edward J. Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 132, 147, 150.

9. Carl F. H. Henry, *Remaking the Modern Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 197, 198, 201, 283.

10. Arthur Holmes, *Christianity and Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 25, 10, 33, 11.

11. Arthur Holmes, *Faith Seeks Understanding* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 141. "Our principal objection would be that it is too Grecian, and as such is too heavy on the reason aspect in things. Too much of the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle is baptized into Christianity." Further, "this system is to be objected to because it does not take revelation as the indispensable starting place, and therefore leaves truth to the mercy of a clever philosopher" (Bernard Ramm, *Problems in Christian Apologetics* [Portland, OR: Western Baptist Theological Seminary, 1949], 22-23).

12. Ronald Nash, "Thomas Aquinas—An Evangelical Appraisal," *Christianity Today* (Mar. 1, 1974): 12.

13. The most popular apologist of our day whose arguments are deeply indebted to Aquinas is C. S. Lewis. This is obvious in *Mere Christianity, Miracles,* and *The Problem of Pain.*

14. See Carnell, *Introduction to Christian Apologetics,* 148f; Clark, *Christian View of Men and Things,* 309ff.

15. See Norman L. Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), pt. 3, for a defense of this point.

16. George Klubertanz, *St. Thomas on Analogy* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960); Battista Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963); Ralph McInerny, *The Logic of Analogy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961).

17. Even Gordon Clark, despite his defense of "literal" God-talk, would fall short of this kind of Platonic dogmatism. See his *Religion, Reason, and Revelation,* 142f.

18. Stuart Hackett, *The Resurrection of Theism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957).

19. Ibid., 117ff.

20. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate,* X, 6, ad 6; *Metaphysics,* IV, lect. 2 (4766); *Summa contra Gentiles,* I, 7; III, 47; *Summa Theologiae,* la2ae. 51, 1; la, 103, 8; 80, 1, ad 3; 77, 3; 78, 1, ad 3; 105, 3; la2ae. 5, 4, ad 3; la, 79, 12.

21. Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1965), 308.

22. T. Aquinas, *Summa theologise, la.* 80, 1, ad 3; cf. 77, 3; 78, 1, ad 3.

23. Cornelius Van Til, "The Total Picture," *Synapse II* 1 (Jan. 1972): 1. Gilbert B. Weaver attempts to distinguish Van Til's view of analogy from that of Aquinas. But he misunderstands Aquinas on at least three points. Weaver wrongly assumes: (1) that Aquinas held that "man may know some things about himself and the world whether God exists or not"; (2) "that all creatures below God are involved to some extent in non-being as well as being"; and (3) that only Van Til holds that "analogy applies not to terms, but to the overall process of human thought [about God]." The fact is that these things Weaver thinks are distinctive about Van Til in contrast to Aquinas are precisely what Aquinas held. See "Man: Analogue of God," in *Jerusalem and Athens,* ed. E. R. Geehan (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), 326-27.

24. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles,* I, *7;* III, 47; *Summa Theologiae,* la. 105, 3.

25. Ibid., la. 2, 3.

26. God is the source of all truth. See n. 19 above and *Summa Theologiae,* la. 16. 1-8; la2ac. 109, 1.

27. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* XIV, 8-9; cf. *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 2, 10; *De Trinitate,* II, 1, ad 5; *Summa contra Gentiles,* I, 6.

28. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la2ae. 77, 4; 83, 3; 84, 2; cf. la2ae. 109, 1-10.

29. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* XIV, 9; *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 1, 5; cf. *De veritate,* XIV, 5, 6.

30. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 2, 3.

31. Ibid., la. 2, 3; la. 11, 3.

32. Van Til, *Defense of the Faith,* 126.

33. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* XIV, 8, 9; XIV, 1, ad 2; *cf. Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 2, 10.

34. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 2, 3; cf. *De Trinitate,* II, 1, ad 5; *De veritate, XIV,* 1, 9; *Summa contra Gentiles,* I, 6.

35. See Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion.*

36. Huw P. Owen, *Concepts of Deity* (London: Herder and Herder, 1971; *Summa Theologiae,* 1a. 8-11, 14, 19.

Chap. 2: The Life of Aquinas

1. My biographical approach follows that of the Roman Catholic pontifical scholars from whom I took courses at a Jesuit institution, the University of Detroit. They thoroughly discredited the religiously embellished, mythological versions of the life of Aquinas.

2. James Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1983), 9.

3. Ibid., 4.

4. Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), 11.

5. Kenelm Foster, *The Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1959), 159.

6. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas,* 11.

7. K. Foster, *Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 159.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 34.

13. J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino,* 4.

14. Ibid.

15. Father Angelus Walz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1951), 5.

16. Ibid., 12.

17. Ibid., 13.

18. Ibid., 19.

19. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas,* 81.

20. K. Foster, *Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 27.

21. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas,* 12.

22. Ibid., 39.

23. K. Foster, *Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 30.

24. Ibid., 28.

25. Father Angelus Walz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 37.

26. Foster, *Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 30.

27. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas,* 24.

28. Father Angelus Walz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 57.

29. K. Foster, *Life of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 26.

30. Ibid., 33.

31. Father Angelus Walz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 62.

32. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas,* 12.

33. Father Angelus Walz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 62.

34. Ibid., 69.

35. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas,* 192.

36. The verse reads: "This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law, that is forever" (Holy Bible, Douay Version, 1609).

37. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas,* 21-22.

38. J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino,* 322.

39. Ibid., 323.

40. Ibid., 320-21.

41. Ibid.

42. J. Weisheipl (Ibid., 336-37) lists some sixteen "Thomistic" propositions that were condemned in 1277.

43. Ibid., 358-403.

44. Ibid., 403-405.

Chap. 3: An Overview of the Thought of Aquinas

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 173, 3, ad 1.

2. Ibid., la. 1, 2, ad 2.

3. Ibid., la. 1, 10, ad 3.

4. Ibid., 2a2ae. 1, 9.

5. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate,* 10 & 2.

6. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 2, 4.

7. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles,* I, 4, 3-5.

8. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 2, 10.

9. Ibid., la. 2, 3.

10. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles, I,* 3, 2.

11. Thomas Aquinas, *De anima,* III, 4.

12. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la2ae. 17, 7.

13. Ibid., la. 17, 3, ad 2.

14. The modern concept of mathematics is much broader, and includes more abstract and non-quantifiable dimensions. Aquinas would have considered this philosophy, not mathematics.

15. Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence.*

16. T. Aquinas, *Summa theologise,* la. 3; la. 7-11.

17. Ibid., la. 4 & 5.

18. Ibid., la. 13; T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles,* I, 29-34.

19. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 44-46.

20. Ibid., la. 75-76.

21. Ibid., la. 90-93.

22. Ibid., la2ac. 91.

23. Ibid., la. 60-61.

Chap. 4: The Bible

1. J. Van der Ploeg, "The Place of Holy Scripture in the Theology of St. Thomas," *Thomist* 10 (1947): 402.

2. Father Angelus Walz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1951), 13.

3. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Albany, N.Y.: Magi, 1966), 22.

4. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), 233.

5. Ibid., 242.

6. Father Angelus Walz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 73.

7. J. Van der Ploeg, "Place of Holy Scripture," 403.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., 405.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 406.

13. With the exception of his first commentary on Matthew, all the others were lectures taken down by his students, and, according to university rules, corrected by the master before publication (see Matthew L. Lamb, introduction to Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians,* 22-23).

14. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas,* 248.

15. T. Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians,* 20.

16. Ibid., 3.

17. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 1, 10.

18. Ibid., la. 1, 2, ad 2.

19. Ibid., la. 1, 3.

20. Ibid., 3a. 1, 3.

21. Ibid., la. 1, 1.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., 2a2ae. 172, 4, ad 1.

24. Ibid., 2a2ae. 173, 4.

25. Ibid.

26. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate,* 12, 4; cf. *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 174, 3, ad 3.

27. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 172, 3.

28. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* 12, 4, ad 1; cf. *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 172, 3, ad 1; 171, 6.

29. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 171, 6; cf. 172, 6.

30. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Hebrews,* I, lect. 4.

31. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2a2ae. 172.3, ad 1.

32. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book of Job,* 13, lect. 1.

33. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 2a2ae. 172.6, ad 2

34. Ibid., 1a. 1.10, ad 3

35. Ibid., 1a.14, 3

36. Ibid., 1a.1.8.

37. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on John 21,* lect. 6.

38. See Jack Rogers, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979).

39. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,*2a2ae. 2, 5.

40. Ibid., 2a2ae. 1, 6, ad 1.

41. T. Aquinas, *De veritate, XIV ,* 10, ad 11, emphasis added.

42. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae.1, 9.

43. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 6, emphasis added.

44. T. Aquinas, *Commentary on John 21,* lect. 6, emphasis added.

45. Some have challenged the conclusion that Aquinas believed the Bible was God's only revelation to the church (see J. Van der Ploeg, "Place of Holy Scripture," 417-18), appealing to his comments on 2 Thess. 2:15 that "much has not been written by the apostles and which, therefore, must be observed." This challenge, however, overlooks the context and the rest of his quotation (from 1 Cor. 11:34, where Paul says, "The rest I shall order when I come"). In the context of the living apostles, yes, there was still unwritten apostolic authority. After their death, however, Aquinas never seems to refer to any apostolic or revelatory authority outside of the Bible. His one isolated reference (in his commentary on Job) to the fall of the devil as the "tradition of the church" can easily be understood as "teaching" of the church based on Scripture. After all, Aquinas believed that many passages in Scripture clearly teach the fall of Satan both before (Gen. 3) and after (Rev. 12) Job, and cites them himself.

46. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. I, 9, ad 1; 10, ad 1.

47. Ibid., la. 1**,** 8.

48. Ibid., la. 1**,** 8, emphasis added.

49. Ibid., 2a2ae. 1, 9.

50. Ibid., 2a2ae. 1, 9, ad 4.

51. Ibid., 2a2ae. 1, 10, ad 1**.**

52. Ibid., 2a2ae. 1, 9, ad 1.

53. See T. Aquinas *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians,* 20-21.

54. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas,* 344.

55. T. Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians,*11.

56. It is noteworthy in this regard that when commenting on 2 Timothy 3:16 (lect. 3) Aquinas does not insert Peter Lombard's qualifying phrase that the holy letters instruct only if they are "spiritually understood."

57. See J. Van der Ploeg, "Place of Holy Scripture," 410.

58. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la.1, 10.

59. Ibid.

60. See his *Contra errores Graecorum,* prooem., n. 1030.

61. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 1, 10.

62. Ibid.

63. Cited by Van der Ploeg, "Place of Holy Scripture," 415.

64. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I a. 1, 10.

65. T. Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians,*15.

66. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 1, 10.

67. Ibid., emphasis added.

68. Prologue to T. Aquinas *Commentary on the Psalms.*

69. Theodore apparently did believe that a few Old Testament passages literally referred to Christ. See T. Aquinas *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians,* 266, n. 78.

70. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Matthew 1,* n. 5.

71. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Psalm 16.*

72. T. Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians,*25.

73. Ibid., 6.

74. Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages,* 2d rev. ed. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), xv.

75. Ibid., 12.
76. Ibid., 13.
77. Ibid., 14.
78. Ibid.
79. Matthew Lamb, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 6.
80. Beryl Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, xv.
81. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae. 92, 1, ad 10.
82. J. Van der Ploeg, "Place of Holy Scripture," 410.
83. The discussion follows M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, 250-53.
84. Ibid., 250.
85. Ibid., 251.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid., 252.
88. According to Matthew Lamb (*Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 22), Aquinas adopted this custom from Guerric of St. Quentin, one of his predecessors in the chair of theology at Paris.
89. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*,252.
90. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, la. 65-74.
91. Ibid., la2ae. 98-105.
92. Ibid., 3a. 27-59.
93. M-D Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, 322.
94. T. Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 29.

Chap. 5: Faith and Reason

1. Thomas Aquinas *Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Albany, NY: Magi, 1966), 96.
2. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, XIV, Al, ad 2.
3. Ibid., ad 6.
4. Ibid.
5. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, la. 2, 2.
6. Ibid., la. 3, 2.
7. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 9.
8. Thomas Aquinas, *De Trinitate*, II, 3.
9. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae. 1, 5, ad 4.
10. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 2, ad 3.
11. Ibid., 2a2ae. 1, 4, ad 2.
12. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 1, reply.
13. T. Aquinas, *De veritate*, XIV, 9, ad 4.
14. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae. 6, 1.
15. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 9, ad 3.
16. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 10, reply. See also *De veritate*, XIV, Al, ad 2.

17. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 6.
18. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,XIV,* 10, ad 11.
19. T. Aquinas, *De Trinitate,* II, 1, ad 5.
20. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae. 2, 1, ad 3.
21. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 1, reply.
22. Ibid., 2a2ae. 4, 1, reply.
23. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 9, reply.
24. Ibid., 2a2ae. 4, 2, reply.
25. T. Aquinas, *De veritate, I, XIV,* 3.
26. Ibid., ad 5.
27. Ibid., 3, reply.
28. Ibid., 5, reply.
29. Ibid., 2, reply.
30. Ibid., 9, reply; *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 1, 5.
31. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* XIV, 9, reply
32. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae. 1, 5.
33. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* XIV, 9, ad 6.
34. Ibid., ad 8.
35. Ibid., A5, reply.
36. Ibid., A5, ad 6.
37. Ibid., 10.
38. Moses Maimonides, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, I, 34.
39. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 4, reply.
40. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 4.
41. Ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 6, ad 1.
42. Ibid., la2ae. 85, 2.
43. T. Aquinas, *De veritate, XIV,* 10, ad 7.
44. Ibid., A2, ad 9.
45. Ibid., 8, ad 2.
46. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 3.
47. Ibid., I, 3, 3.
48. T. Aquinas, *De Trinitate,I,* 1, 4.
49. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* XIV, 9, ad 1.
50. T. Aquinas, *De Trinitate, II,* 3.
51. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* XIV, 9, reply.
52. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles, 1, 7* [1].
53. 56. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* XIV, Al. See also *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae.2, 1.

Chap. 6: The First Principles of Knowledge

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Peri Hermeneias,* I, lect. 8.

2. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle,* trans. John P. Rowan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1961), 244.

3. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 33, 1.

4. Ibid.

5. L. M. Regis, *Epistemology* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 378.

6. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la2ae. 66, 5, ad 4.

7. Ibid., la. 33, ad 3.

8. James Bacon Sullivan, *An Examination of First Principles in Thought and Being in the Light of Aristotle and Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1939), p. 235.

9. Thomas Aquinas, *Metaphysics,* V, lect. 11, n. 912; WI, leer. 17, *n.* 1652; *Sent.,* I, 19, 1, 1, ad 2.

10. Regis, *Epistemology,* 395.

11. Ibid., 388-89.

12. T. Aquinas, *Metaphysics,* IV, lects. 6-17; XI, 5-7.

13. T. Aquinas, *Peri Hermeneias, I,* lect. 11, n. 5.

14. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles, II,* 15.

15. Aquinas never refers to the so-called principle of sufficient reason. According to some scholastic philosophers, however, he uses it in his "Third Way" when he argues from contingency to necessity (Sullivan, *Examination of First Principles,* p. 80). Others say that it is an epistemological aspect of the principle of contradiction. Regis, for example, says: "But the principle of *raison d'etre,* or sufficient reason, is nothing but the thing's capacity to account for itself to human reason . . to be intelligible and understood. . . . However, the unintelligible has no *raison d'etre,* guarantees nothing, therefore is the foundation for no truth, however small" *(Epistemology,* p. 390). Leibnitz originated the phrase "sufficient reason" in his *Theodicae* (I, n. 44) and defended it, when challenged, in his *Fifth Letter to Mr. Samuel Clarke* (n. 125). Sullivan considers it to be broader than the principle of contradiction since the latter applies only to finite contingent being whereas "sufficient reason" applies to God. It says only that "everything must have a sufficient reason" (whether in itself or another). Causality, on the other hand, demands that every contingent being does not have a sufficient reason for its existence in itself but must find its cause in another. Sufficient reason, says Sullivan, tells us that there is a reason; causality shows us where it is *(Examination of First Principles,* pp. 80-83).

16. Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia,* II, I. c; *Sent.,* II, 34, 1, 3.

17. Regis, *Epistemology,* p. 402.

18. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la2ae. 6, 1, ad 1.

19. T. Aquinas, *Metaphysics,* IV, c. 3, 10056.

20. See his *Elements of Philosophy,* vol 2.

21. Sullivan, *Examination of First Principles,* 58.

22. T. Aquinas, *Metaphysics,* IV, *c.* (1005b).

23. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* I a2ae. 94, 2.

24. According to Sullivan, those scholastic philosophers who contend for the primacy of identity over non-contradiction "use quotations from St. Thomas favoring the primacy of the principle of Contradiction to confirm their contentions, and maintain that it is the same thing as the principle of Identity" *(Examination of First Principles,* p. 56). Sullivan traces the

influence of the primacy of identity among philosophers to Sir William Hamilton *(Lectures on Logic [1886]).*

Regis observes that since Kant and the rule of the mathematic method, identity has had primacy. This is an exaltation rooted in a philosophical idealism that denies the concrete and makes existential being the starting point for philosophical reflection *(Epistemology,* p. 391). Along this same line Sullivan notes that even Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* depends on noncontradiction for its certainty because "consciousness can be doubted as well as any other source of knowledge. Moreover, even the judgment 'I think' presupposes the principle of Contradiction, for in making it one presupposes that one cannot at that time be not thinking; if one could, this judgment would be useless as a principle of further knowledge" *(Examination of First Principles*, p. 40).

25. Ibid., 96.
26. T. Aquinas, *Metaphysics*, IV,c.4 (1006a).
27. Ibid., IV, lect. 2.
28. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 1a58, 4.
29. Sullivan, *Examination of First Principles*, 26.
30. T. Aquinas, *Metaphysics,* XI, lect. 4.
31. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 17, 3, ad 2.
32. See Regis, *Epistemology,* 374.
33. See Sullivan, *Examination of First Principles,* 121-22.
34. T. Aquinas, *Summa theolagiae,* la2ae. 2, 10, ad 2.
35. Ibid., la2ae. 17, 7.
36. T. Aquinas, *Physics, lect.* 10, n. 5.
37. T. Aquinas, *Sent.*, III, 27, 1, 2, c.
38. T. Aquinas, *Peri Hermeneias,* I, lect. 8, nn. 11, 15.
39. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la2ae. 105, 2, ad 8.
40. Cardinal John Newman speaks of a series of converging probabilities that can yield certainty and demand assent *(Grammar of Assent* [London: Longmans, Green, 1987], 72), but Aquinas does not speak of rational certitude in this sense.
41. Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *Man's Knowledge of Reality: An Introduction to Thomistic Epistemology* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1956), 171.
42. Ibid., pp. 172-73.
43. T. Aquinas, *Peri Hermeneias, I,* lect. 8, nn. 8,19-21.
44. T. Aquinas, *De anima,* III, lect. 4, n. 624; cf. *Summa contra Gentiles,* I, 4.
45. Wilhelmsen, *Man's Knowledge of Reality,* 179.
46. T. Aquinas, *De veritate, XIV, 1,* c.
47. Wilhelmsen, *Man's Knowledge of Reality,* 157.
48. T. Aquinas, *Physics,* lect. 10, n. 5.
49. Wilhelmsen, *Man's Knowledge of Reality,* 419.
50. Sullivan, *Examination of First Principles,*30.
51. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 85, 5, ad 3.
52. Ibid., la. 16, 1.
53. Thomas Aquinas, *Existence and Analogy* (New York: Longmans, 1945), 45.

54. See Fernand Van Steenberghen, *Epistemology* (New York: Wagner, 1949), for further elaboration of this view.

55. Wilhelmsen, *Man's Knowledge of Reality,* 40.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., 41.

58. Sullivan, *Examination of First Principles,* 98.

59. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature* (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1945), vol. 1, 117.

60. T. Aquinas, *De Trinitate,* V, 4, c.

61. Aristotle, *De anima,* III, 4 (430a 1).

62. T. Aquinas, *Summa theologise,* la. 79,2.

63. Ibid., la. 84, 8, ad 1.

64. Ibid., la. 84, 6, ad 1.

65. Aristotle, *De anima,* III, 4, ad 6.

66. T. Aquinas, *Metaphysics,* IV, lect. 6, c 599.

67. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 85, 5.

68. Ibid., la. 16, 2.

69. Sullivan, *Examination of First Principles,* p. 21.

70. Regis, *Epistemology,* 376.

71. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 84, 6, ad 1.

72. Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 308.

73. T. Aquinas, *Metaphysics,* IV, lect. 6, 2 (476B).

74. T. Aquinas, *De veritate,* 10, 6, ad 6.

75. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la2ae. 51, 1.

76. Ibid., la. 103, 8; 80, 1, ad 3; 77, 3; 78, 1, ad 3.

77. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles, I, 7;* III, 47; *Summa Theologiae, I,* 105, 3.

78. T. Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book of Job,* lect. 3.

79. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la2ae. 5, 4, ad 3.

80. Ibid., la. 79, 12.

81. Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1937), 246.

82. Sullivan, *Examination of First Principles,* 136.

83. Ibid., 33.

84. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 60, 1, ad 3.

85. Ibid., la. 80, 1, ad 3; cf. 77, 3; 78, 1, ad 3.

86. Ibid., la. 103, 8.

87. Ibid., la. 78, 1, ad 3.

Chap. 7: Reality

1. See M.-D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1964), 330-31.

2. Parmenides, Frag. 2, in *The Presocratic Philosophers,* trans. G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 269. All other quotations from Parmenides are taken from this translation.

3. Parmenides, Frag. 7.

4. Parmenides, Frag. 8.

5. Ibid.

6. The discussion here is based on the article by Leonard J. Eslick, "The Real Distinction: Reply to Professor Reese," *Modern Schoolman* 38 (Jan. 1961): 149-61.

7. Ibid.

8. Simplicius, *Physics,* 28, 4, in *The Presocratic Philosophers,* trans. G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 400.

9. See Plato's *Parmenides,* especially 129 b—c; 142. On this whole question of Plato's later view of the Forms, see R. J. Teske, "Plato's Later Dialectic," *Modern Schoolman* 38 (Mar. 1961): 188: "The *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus* seem rather to represent a break away with the early theory of Forms and vet await the fuller exposition of the theory."

10. The earlier Platonic view of indivisible, unrelated Forms may be seen in *Phaedo* (103 b —c, e) and the *Republic* (526 a—b). As the *Parmenides (129* b—c) and the *Theaetetus* (203 e) indicate, Plato saw that his Forms as isolated spiritual atoms, unrelated to one another, would make scientific knowledge impossible. The *Sophist* (241 d) and *Statesman* represent a new position, where Plato introduces the notion of relative nonbeing as the relating principle. On this later Platonic view, see L. J. Eslick, "The Dyadic Character of Being in Plato," *Modern Schoolman* 31 (Nov. 1953): 15; and Teske, "Plato's Later Dialectic," 191-92.

11. *Sophist,* 241 d. All references to Plato are taken from *The Collected Dialogues of Plato, cds.* Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).

12. *Sophist,* 255 d. This "other" seems to be the same as the "receptacle" of the *Timaeus,* the "unlimited" of the *Philebus,* and the "indefinite Dyad" of Plato's oral teaching (mentioned by Aristotle in *Metaphysics, XIV ,* 3, 109a, 1-5).

13. Aristotle held another position in which he explained a plurality of things by their composition of form and matter (act and potency) *(Metaphysics,* IX, 5, 1017a 35h—a), but he apparently never worked out the act/potency distinction on the level of pure Forms or Being.

14. The number varies because of two different astronomical systems that are indifferent to the metaphysical assertion that there are many (regardless how many) such simple beings.

15. Leonard J. Eslick, "Real Distinction," 152-53.

16. Aristotle, *Metaphysics, XII,* 8, 1073a-1074a.

17. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 4, 1, ad 3.

18. Ralph Mclnerny, *St. Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 95.

19. T. Aquinas, *Concerning Being and Essence,* trans. George G. Leckie (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1937), 24.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid., 24-25.

24. Ibid., 26.

25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 59.
27. Ibid., p. 6.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., *7.*
30. Ibid., 8.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., p. 9.
33. Ibid., p. *17.*
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 28, 29, 32.
36. This is the position of Giles of Rome, but not of Aquinas.

Chap. 8: God's Nature

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 1, 111; la. 1, 2; Ia. 1, 3, etc.
2. Ibid., la. 9, 1.
3. Ibid., la., 9, 2.
4. Ibid., la. 10, 1.
5. Ibid., la. 10, 2.
6. Ibid., la. 10, 3.
7. Ibid., la. 10, 4.
8. Ibid., reply to objection 2.
9. Ibid., la. 11, 3.
10. Ibid., la. 13, 7.
11. Ibid., la. 13, 7, ad 2.
12. Ibid., la. 13, 7, ad 5.
13. Ibid., la. 14, 2.
14. Ibid., la., 14, 3.
15. Ibid., la. 14, 10.
16. Ibid., la. 14, 4.
17. Ibid., la. 14, 5.
18. Ibid., 1a. 14, 15.
19. Ibid., 1a, 1, 2.
20. Ibid., 1a. 14, 11.
21. Ibid., 1a. 14, 6.
22. Ibid., la. 14, 7.
23. Ibid., la. 14, 7, ad 2.
24. Ibid., la. 14, 7, ad 3 and 4.
25. Ibid., la. 14, 8.
26. Ibid., la. 14, 8, ad 2.
27. Ibid., la. 14, 9.

28. Ibid., la. 14, 13.

29. Ibid., la. 14, 14.

30. Ibid., la. 19, 1.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., la. 19, 2.

33. Ibid., la. 19, 2, ad 1.

34. Ibid., la. 19, 2, ad 2.

35. Ibid., la. 19, 2, ad 3.

36. Ibid., la. 19, 2, ad 4.

37. Ibid., la. 19, 3, ad 3.

38. Ibid., la. 19, 3.

39. Ibid., la. 19, 4.

40. Ibid., la. 19, 4, ad 1.

41. Ibid., la. 19, 5.

42. Ibid., la. 19, 6.

43. Ibid., la. 19, 6, ad 2.

44. Ibid., la. 19, 7.

45. Schubert M. Ogden, *The Reality of God and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 17.

46. Ibid., reply

47. S. Ogden, *Reality of God,* 17.

48. Ibid., 18.

49. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 1, 19, 3.

50. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 1, 13, 7.

51. Charles Hartshorne, *Creative Synthesis and Philosophic Method* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1970), 48.

52. Ibid.

53. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 1, 14, 13, reply.

Chap. 9: Human Nature

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* la. 2, 3.

2. The fourth argument is an argument from exemplar causality. The first three are from efficient causality, and the fifth from final causality.

3. See Norman L. Geisler and Win Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1988) Chap. 9 for a parallel discussion.

4. David Hume, *The Letters of David Hume,* ed. J. Y. T. Greig, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), 1: 187.

5. There are two other reasons some philosophers never arrive at this theistic conclusion. One is that they never ask metaphysical questions about the nature of reality of being as such. Some are preoccupied with procedural questions (how?) or with descriptive questions (what?) or with the pragmatic question (so what?) and never ask the metaphysical question (why?). Second, those who do ask basic metaphysical questions do not always give a metaphysical answer. Heidegger asked the basic metaphysical question of why there is something rather

than nothing at all. But he did not give a satisfactory answer. He said *Dasein* (man) is simply the being-there, the thrust one who is gratuitously hanging without any grounding. He is dependent, but not dependent on anything. He is thrust there, but no one thrust him there. His existence is given, but there is no Giver. It causes its own existence (which is impossible), while it is causing the existence of everything else in the series.

6. Aquinas rejects eternal creation, not because he believes it is philosophically impossible but because it is doctrinally incorrect (see Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 11:3).

7. Sec Milton R. Munitz, *The Mystery of Existence* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965); Thomas McPherson, "Finite and Infinite," *Mind* 66 (1957): 379-84.

8. Alvin Plantinga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1974), 80.

9. The cosmological argument in its existential form is not new. Anselm, Aquinas, and Scotus all had strong forms of it (see chap. 8). Due to the influence of rationalism, modern philosophy has obscured the full force of this form of the cosmological argument by importing the principle of sufficient reason. See John E. Gurr, *The Principle of Sufficient Reason in Some Scholastic Systems, 1750-1900* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1959), 130.

Chap. 10: Human Nature

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 11.
2. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a10.5.
3. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a. 9-92.
4. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.92.4.
5. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.92.7, reply to Obj. 1.
6. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.93.9.
7. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a. 9092.
8. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.100.1.
9. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.44.1.
10. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.76.3. ad 3.
11. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.119.2. ad 2.
12. See Stephen Heaney, "Aquinas and the Humanity of the Conceptus" in *Human Life Review*, vol. 15 No.1, 1989.
13. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.2.3, third way.
14. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.2.3.
15. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.75.1.
16. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2a-2ae.25.5.
17. Thomas Gilby, *Thomas Aquinas: Philosophical Texts* #543 from *de Anima* 1 ad 7; 2 ad 14.
18. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.75.1.
19. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.75.1.
20. T. Gilby, *Philosophical Tests*, #551 from *de Anima* 421a25.
21. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.76.2.
22. Gilby, *Philosophical Tests*, #558 from *Unity of the Intellec*t.
23. Gilby *Philosophical Tests*, #558 from *Unity of the Intellect*.
24. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.76.2.

25. Gilby *Philosophical Tests*, #557 from *Metaphysics* 1045b16.
26. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.76.8.
27. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a76.8.
28. Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* #152.
29. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.76.1 ad 5.
30. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.75.4.
31. T. Aquinas, *2 Summa contra Gentiles*, 56, 57.
32. T. Aquinas, *2 Summa contra Gentiles*, 56, 57, emphasis added.
33. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.76.3.
34. T. Aquinas, *2 Summa contra Gentiles*, 56, 57.
35. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.76.1.
36. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.76.1.
37. T. Gilby, *Philosophical Tests*, from *On Causes*, lect. 14.
38. Thomas Aquinas, *De Anima* II.I. 234.
39. La Rock, "Dualistic Interaction, Natural Dependency, and Aquinas's Composite View" in *Philosophia Christi*. Series 2 vol. 3 No. 2 2001, 465.
40. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologia,* 1a.80.1.
41. *Arabic Influences in Aquinas's Doctrine of Intelligilbe Species.* e-publications@Marquette, 2009.
42. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 1, Chap. 10.
43. T. Aquinas, *On Power,* 110.
44. T. Aquinas, *On Power,* Q 3, Art, 2, Reply 4.
45. T. Aquinas, *On Power,* Q 6, Reply 4.
46. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology,* Chap. 129.
47. T. Aquinas, *On Power,* Q 3, Art, 2, Reply 4.
48. T. Aquinas, *On Power,* QE 6, Reply 4.
49. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology,* Chap. 129.
50. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.6.1.
51. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.6.1.
52. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Chap. 73.
53. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.9.3.
54. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.49, 1.
55. T. Aquinas, *On Power,* 110.
56. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, *1.13.6.*
57. C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, 460.
58. C. S. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 106-107.
59. T. Aquinas, *On Power,* Q 6, Response.
60. Ibid.
61. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.109.8.
62. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a-2ae.85.1.
63. Ibid.

64. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a-2e.85.2.
65. T. Aquinas, *On Power, Q. 6, Objection 23.*
66. T. Aquinas, *On Power, Q. 6, Reply 23.*
67. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, vol. 3, 11.
68. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a. 49, 3.
69. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.65.1.
70. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a. 49, 3.
71. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.49, 3.
72. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1a.49,3.
73. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Chap 15.
74. Augustine, *On the Morals of the Manicheans*, 5.7.
75. T. Gilby, *Philosophical Tests* # 514.
76. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 154.
77. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 155.
78. T. Gilby, *Philosophical Tests*, #543 from *de Anima*1 ad 7; 2 ad 14.
79. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 153.
80. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 159.
81. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 161.
82. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 160.
83. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 158.
84. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 156.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 157.
88. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 157).
89. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 175.
90. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 176.
91. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 177.
92. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 179.
93. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 180.
94. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 183).
95. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 53.
96. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 149.
97. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 62.
98. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology* 151.

Chap. 11: Religious Language

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 32.
2. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, II, 1, body.
3. Ralph Mclnerny, *The Logic of Analogy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961).

4. Armand Maurer, "St. Thomas and the Analogy of Genus," *New Scholasticism 29* (Apr. 1955): 143.

5. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, la. 13, 5.

6. Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Allan Wolter (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), 20-21, 180-81.

7. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 33.

8. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, la. 13, 10.

9. Ibid., la. 13, 5. Sec also *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 29-30.

10. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, la. 2, 3.

11. Sec Battista Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963).

12. Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*; See Chap. 7.

13. Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, 7, 7, body.

14. Ever since Cardinal Cajetan's (d. 1534) noted work on analogy (*The Analogy of Names and the Concept of Being*), this topic has been hotly debated among Thomists. Aquinas apparently uses the analogy of proper proportionality to explain how both God and creatures could possess the same attribute. Nonetheless, when offering a basis for belief that there is a real similarity between God and creatures, Aquinas refers to the intrinsic relation between an efficient cause and its effect.

15. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 29, 2.

16. Ibid., I, 33.

17. Ibid., I, 13, 5.

18. Many of these objections are taken from Frederick Ferre's article on analogy in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Free, 1973), 1: 94-97.

19. These are elaborated in Norman L. Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), Chap. 10.

20. For a more comprehensive discussion, see David Burrell, *Analogy and Philosophical Language* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

21. Ibid., Chap. 13.

Chap. 12: Evil

1. Norman L. Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), Part 4.

2. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science religion, wrote: “God is all. . . . Therefore, all that really exists is in and of God”). And “Evil is but an illusion, and has no real basis” (Baker, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, 480, 339-240.

3. Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil*, Q1, Art. 1.

4. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Chap. 7.

5. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.18, 3.

6. Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, 114.
7. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, vol. 3,11.
8. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.49, 3.
9. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.49, 1.
10. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, 110.
11. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 49, 3.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Chap. 15.
16. Augustine, *On the Morals of the Manicheans* 5.7.
17. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 1, Chap. 10.
18. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, 111.
19. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, 110).
20. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1.6.1.
21. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1.6.1.
22. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Chap. 73.
23. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1.9.3.
24. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.13.6.
25. C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape Letters*, 460.
26. C. S. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, 106-107.
27. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, Q 3, Art, 2, Reply 4.
28. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, Q. 6, Reply 4.
29. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, Chap. 129.
30. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, Q 6, Response.
31. Ibid.
32. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, Q. 6, Objection 23.
33. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, Q. 6, Reply 23.

34. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, Chap. 142.
35. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 1, Chap. 3.
36. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 1, Chap. 12.
37. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 1, Chap. 64.
38. T. Gilby, *Thomas Aquinas: Philosophical Texts*, 169.
39. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1.14.4.
40. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1.10,4.
41. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, 19, 9.
42. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 1, Chap. 17.
43. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 1, Chap. 17.
44. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.48, 1, Obj. 5.
45. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.48, 1 Reply 5.
46. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, Chap. 119.
47. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.49.2.
48. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a 49.3.
49. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, Q. 3, Art. 3, Reply 4.
50. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a. 49.2.
51. T. Aquinas, *On Evil*, Q. 5, Art. 5.
52. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.48, 5.
53. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.49, 1.
54. Ibid.
55. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.49, 1..
56. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.48, 6).
57. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.49, 2.
58. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 1, Chap. 74.
59. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 1, Chap. 74.
60. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, 137.
61. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, 138.

62. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, Vol. 3, 12.

63. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.48, 4.

64. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a-2ae, 85, 2.

65. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a-2ae, 85, 2.

66. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.64, 2.

67. Ibid.

68. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, Chap. 165.

69. T. Aquinas, *Compendium of Theology*, Chap. 183.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

Chap. 13: Law and Morality

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theolquiae*, la2ae. 90, I, c. and ad 3.
2. Ibid., la2ae. 90, 4.
3. Ibid., la2ae. 90, 1 and ad 3.
4. Ibid., la2ae. 90, 2.
5. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, 3.
6. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, la2ae. 90, 4.
7. T. Aquinas, *De veritate*, 3, ad 1.
8. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, la2ae. 91, 6.
9. Ibid., la2ae. 91, 1.
10. Ibid., la2ae. 93, 3.
11. Ibid. la2ae., 91, 2.
12. Ibid., la2ae. 71, 6, ad 4.
13. Ibid., la2ae. 91, 2.
14. Thomas Aquinas, *De malo*, 4.
15. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, la. 49, 3, ad 5.
16. Ibid., la2ae. 71, 6.
17. Ibid., la2ae. 21, 1.
18. Ibid., la2ae. 91, 5, ad 2.
19. Ibid., la2ae. 95, 2.
20. Ibid., 2a2ae. 57, 2, ad 3.
21. Thomas Aquinas, *De correction fraterna*, *1*.
22. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologise*, la2ae. 96, 2.
23. Ibid., 2a2ae. 77, 1.

24. Ibid., 2a2ae. 96, 3.
25. Ibid., la2ae. 95, 3.
26. Ibid., la2ae. 90, 2.
27. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles,* III, 111-16.
28. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 57, 2, ad 3.
29. Ibid., la2ae. 99, 2.
30. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles,* III, 111-16.
31. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 68, 1.
32. Ibid., 2a2ae. 120, 1.
33. Thomas Aquinas, *Ethics,* V, lect. 16.
34. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 120, 1.
35. Ibid., 2a2ae. 57, 2, ad 3.
36. Aquinas does not envision real conflicts within two or more natural laws and hence does not offer a hierarchy of moral principles in this context.
37. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 3a. 90, 4, ad 3.
38. Ibid., 2a2ae. 120, 1, ad 2.
39. Ibid., 2a2ae. 120, 2.
40. Ibid., 2a2ae. 47, 6, ad 3.
41. Ibid., la2ae. 57, 4.
42. Ibid., 2a2ae. 47, 1, ad 3.
43. Ibid., 2a2ae. 47, 2, ad 3.
44. Ibid., 2a2ae. 47, 6.
45. Ibid., 2a2ae. 47, 4.
46. Ibid., 2a2ae. 47, 11.
47. Ibid., 2a2ae. 47, 8.
48. Ibid., 2a2ae. 47, 3, ad 2.
49. *Ethics,* VI, lect. 4.
50. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 123, 6.
51. Thomas Aquinas, *On the Cardinal Virtues,* 1, ad 14.
52. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 123, 2.
53. T. Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles,* III, 62.
54. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 2a2ae. 123, 9.
55. Ibid., 2a2ae. 123, 6.
56. Ibid., 2a2ae. 141, 8.
57. T. Aquinas, *On the Cardinal Virtues,* 1, ad 6.
58. T. Aquinas, *Summa theologiae,* 2a2ae. 142, 2.
59. Ibid., 2a2ae. 142, 1, ad 2.
60. Ibid., 2a2ae. 23, 3, ad 1.
61. Ibid., 2a2ae. 57, 1.
62. Ibid., 2a2ae. 58, 3, ad 3.
63. Ibid., 2a2ae. 57, 2.

64. Ibid., 2a2ae. 57, 2, ad 2.
65. Ibid., la2ae. 58, 3, ad 3.
66. Ibid., 1a.1.1, 8 ad 2.
67. Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium of theology*, 2.
68. T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. 67, 4 ad 1.
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70. T. Aquinas, *Summa Thelogiae* 1a2ae.62, 4.
71. Ibid., 1a2ae 64, 4 ad 3.
72. Ibid., 1a2ae 65, 4.
73. T. Aquinas, *De caritate*, 3.
74. Ibid., 5 ad 4.
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79. T. Aquinas, *De perfectione vitae spiritualis*, 1-8.
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I. While Teaching at Paris the First Time (1252—1259)

Scriptura super libros Sententiarum (*Commentary on the Sentences*), 1254—1256

De principiis naturae (*On the Principles of Nature*), 1256

De ente et essentia (*On Being and Essence*), 1256

De veritate (*On Truth*), 1256—1259

De Trinitate (*On the Trinity*), 1259

Summa contra Gentiles (may have been begun 1259)

Compendium theologiae (either here or very late)

Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et Religionem (*Against Those Who Impugn the Worship and Religion of God*), before 1256

II. While Teaching in Italy the First Time (1259—1268)

De potentia (*On the Power of God*), 1259—1268

Summa contra Gentiles, 1259—1263

Summa Theologiae I, II, 1265—1271

Catena aurea (*Golden Chain* on the Gospels), after 1263

III. While in Paris the Second Time (1268—1272)

De spiritualibus creaturis (*On Spiritual Creatures*), 1266/67

Posteriorum Analyticorum Expositio (*Commentary on Posterior Analytics*), 1268ff.

De anima (*On the Soul*), 1268-1270

In Duodecim Libros Meta. expositio (*Commentary on XII Book of Meta.*), 1268—1271

De unitate intellectus (*On the Unity of the Intellect*), 1269

Politicorum expositio (Commentary on Politics of Aristotle), 1265—1271

Meteorologicorum expositio (*Commentary on Meteors*), 1269—1272 *In Decem Libros Ethicorum expositio (Commentary on X Book of Ethics)*, 1271/72

Perihermeneias (*On Interpretation*), 1269—1272

De malo (*On Evil*), 1269—1272

De virtutibus (*On Virtues*), 1269—1272

IV. While in Italy the Second Time (1272—1274)

Summa theologiae III, 1272/73

De caelo et mundo (*On the Heaven and the Earth*), 1272/73 *De regno* (*On Kingship*), 1272—1274(?) or earlier

1224/25	Birth in Roccasecca, Italy
1230/31-1239	Oblate at Benedictine Monastery, Monte Cassino
1239-1244	University studies in Naples
1243, Dec. 24	Death of his father, Landulf
1244, Apr.	Joined Dominicans in Naples
1244 (May)-1245	Abducted by family, taken to Roccasecca
1245-1248	Studies in Paris as Novitiate
1248-1252	Studies in Cologne with Albert the Great
1250/51	Ordained to the priesthood
1252-1256	Studied Bible and theology in Paris
1256	Gave inaugural address as Master in Theology
1256-1259	Taught and wrote in Paris
1259-1261	Continued writing in Naples
1261-1267	Continued writing in Rome
1268-1272	Taught in Paris
1273, Dec. 6	Breakdown, cessation of writing
1274, Mar. 7	Death at Fossanova on way to Council of Lyon
1277, Mar. 7	Condemnation of propositions in Paris
1319,1321	First and second canonization proceedings
1323, July 18	Canonization (made a Saint) by Pope John XXII
1325, Feb. 14	Revocation of Paris condemnation
1369, Jan. 28	Transfer of remains to Toulouse, Italy

	God	Angels	Humans
Mode of Being	Uncaused	Caused	Caused
Esse	Pure Act	Complete Act	Progressive Act
Duration	Without Potency	With Completed	With Uncompleted
		Potency	Potency
Change	None	Substantial Change	Substantial and
		Only	Accidental Change
(Material) What	Permanent but	Permanent but	Temporal,
Is Measured	Uncreated Being	Created Being	Changing, Created
			Being
(Formal) How	By Unity and	By Unity and	By Plurality and
Measured	Reason	Reason	Number
Before/After	No Before or After	No "Before and	Before and After
		After" but Can Be	
		Joined to It	
Nature/Will	Not Changeable in	Not Changeable in	Changeable in
	Nature or Will	Nature, but Changeable in Will	Nature, Will, Place, etc.
Relation to	Cannot Be Joined	Not Changing but	Changeable by
Change	to Change by	Can Be Joined to It	Nature
	Nature		

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